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THE USES OF MADNESS IN NINETEENTH- AND TWENTIETH-CENTURY FICTION

**The Relation Between Narrative Strategy and Disturbed States
of Consciousness**

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SUMMARY

The thesis operates upon the premise that there has been, in the course of the last two centuries, a radical transformation in narrative presentations of exceptional states of consciousness. It sets out to identify the main characteristics of the fictional transformation, and to situate them in the context of wider cultural shifts. I decided to rest my approach upon the relatively conservative sense that, roughly speaking, the structural and linguistic analysis of a narrative topos — that is to say the protagonist's madness — can elicit a clearer understanding of the changing, underlying dynamics and thematics of fictional works as they emerge over a given historical period.

The thesis is set out in two parts; Part I explores nineteenth century uses of madness, and Part II compares and contrasts more recent treatments. The study of the different presentations of madness in fiction is organized diachronically for heuristic purposes, although the typological emphasis of the thesis must eventually take precedence over the imposition of a rigid historical framework.

In the nineteenth century it is predominantly an intellectually marginalized kind of fiction (often termed 'gothic') which deals with exceptional psychic experience. It does so in a way which engages with the treacherous 'otherness' of mad experience, which is often aligned with the supernatural. In these texts the position of the narrator in relation to such phenomenon is of paramount importance. More recent treatments of 'madness' display a tendency to undermine its 'otherness' and to move towards narrative identification with such states.

The method of investigation functions upon several levels. In order to provide a constructive counter-perspective upon fictional treatments of madness and to forge the link with contemporary methodologies, the study commences with the narratological analysis of a work written by a (clinically diagnosed) psychotic author which has achieved the status of a classic within psychiatric, psychoanalytical and even recent cultural theory. The narrative structure of D. P. Schreber's *Memoirs* finds its equivalent in a kind of fiction identified in this thesis as 'paranoid'.

Twentieth century clinical discourse increasingly has recourse to the very broad term 'schizophrenia' as a synonym for the outmoded term 'madness'. The current emphasis upon linguistic concerns in the definition and location of psychosis allows the critical grouping of certain kinds of texts under the heading of 'schizoid', due to the discovery of analogous characteristics at work within their (anti)narrative strategy. Again, these terms are heuristically intended and cannot be scientifically precise. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the current centrality of a terminology of psychopathology to the ways in which fictionists, critics and theorists describe, prescribe and understand the 'postmodern' self and world.

This project offers an overview of attitudes to madness as they are transformed in fiction in the course of a historical period. The way in which madness functions in these texts is, first of all, not only as the instrument of literary exploration but also as a means of transgressing boundaries between sanity and insanity. The period is crucial, further, in its radical transitional nature with regard to concepts of fundamental import for the novel form: most particularly, ideas of the 'self' and ideas of 'reality', as objectively stable or as subjective and illusory. For the fictional articulation of these, the topos of 'madness' serves as the ultimate measure.

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CONTENTS

Summary

Acknowledgements

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Preliminary.....	1
Using Madness.....	6
Madness and Narrative.....	12
Summary of Method and Structure.....	18

PART I: PARANOID FICTION

Introduction: Madness and Gothic Fiction.....	22
---	----

1. D. P. Schreber's <i>Memoirs of My Nervous Illness: A Model</i>	29
Schreber's Narrative.....	29
Schreber's Narrative Strategy.....	32
Schreber's Paranoid Logic.....	39
Narration and Paranoia.....	43
Plot, Speculation and the Integrative Principle.....	45
2. Plotting Damnation: James Hogg's <i>Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner</i>	50
Narrative Structure: The Double Account.....	50
Narrative Technique: The Double Narrative and Cognitive Uncertainty.....	58
Wringhim's Paranoid Logic.....	64
Plotting Damnation: The Text.....	73
3. Plotting the Unearthly: Edgar Allan Poe's <i>The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket</i>	76
Narrative Structure: Internal Disjunction.....	76
Narrative Technique: Impaired Testimony.....	81
Pym's Paranoid Logic.....	88
Plotting the Unearthly: The Text.....	94
4. Plotting the Diabolical: Robert Louis Stevenson's 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde'.....	99
Narrative Structure: A Composite Account.....	99
Narrative Technique: The Failure of Syncretism.....	104
Dr. Jekyll's Paranoid Logic.....	110
Plotting the Diabolical: The Text.....	114

Conclusion: Provocative Narratives and the Paranoid Text.....	120
---	-----

PART II: SCHIZOID FICTION

Introduction: Madness and Modern Fiction..... 129

1. Decomposition in Herman Melville's 'Bartleby the Scrivener'... 140
 Narrative Structure: Story-telling Against the Grain..... 140
 Decomposition: The Text..... 153

2. Disintegration in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*..... 156
 Narrative and the Unauthorised Narrator..... 156
 Narration and Disintegration..... 161
 Protest and Schizoid Textuality..... 173

3. Authentic Discontinuity in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*..... 177
 Narration and Authentic Discontinuity..... 177
 Social Coercion and the 'Authentic Self'..... 181
 Schizoid Discontinuity..... 193

4. Dissolution in Samuel Beckett's *The Unnamable*..... 201
 Narration and Dissolution..... 201
 Watt..... 204
 The Unnamable..... 216
 Schizoid Textuality..... 228

5. Antinarratives and the Schizoid Text: Jeanne Hyvrard's *Mother Death*..... 231
 A Different Kind of Unnamability..... 231
 Madness and Protest: Reclaiming Uncharted Territory..... 242
 Madness and Liberation? Antinarrative and Metanarrative..... 252

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Postmodernism: Using Madness in Context..... 261
 Self and Psychosis in Postmodern Fiction..... 262
 The Culture of Psychosis: Critical Representations..... 266
In Conclusion: Using Madness Critically..... 274

Appendix

Schreber's *Memoirs* Remodeled: Freud, Lacan and Laing..... 283
 Freud and Narrative..... 283
 Lacan and Language..... 290
 Further Linguistic Approaches..... 294
 Laing and Anti-Psychiatry..... 297

NOTES..... 301

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 352

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Preliminary

This thesis originated in the observation that, in the course of the last two centuries, narrative presentations of madness have changed. On looking through the literature on the subject, it became apparent that there has been no specifically diachronic study of alterations in narrative technique in the fiction concerned. I therefore set out to identify the main characteristics of this transformation. In the course of my effort to build such a study certain paradigms or models emerged for the reading of narrative discourse in texts that deal with madness. The congruence of these models with more generalised shifts in literary practice suggested that the structural and linguistic analysis of a recurring narrative topos in the fiction of madness (the disturbed perception of a main protagonist) might contribute to a clearer understanding of the changing, underlying dynamics and thematics of fictional works as they emerge over a given historical period.

The critic who wishes to examine literary works from the perspective of their treatment of madness may, however, negotiate an array of methods now available for this kind of study. These methods have already given rise to a variety of critical studies, the substance of which can be only briefly suggested here. In outlining these established modes of analysis I will attempt to indicate to what extent they have been influential in the development of the narratological approach undertaken in this thesis.

The major critical stratagems for analysing madness in fiction tend

to belong to these main categories: socio-cultural criticism, psychological and psychoanalytical criticism, biographical criticism, philosophical criticism, or eclectic and productive combinations of these. Perhaps the most significant single text on the subject is Michel Foucault's controversial *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961, translated in 1967) which eludes easy categorization, but which must now be taken into account by any critic attempting an extended study of literary interest in psychopathology. Foucault's attempt to reveal the ways in which an authentic, original and irrational level of awareness has been silenced or obscured by the functions of social institutions enlists madness in a cultural critique. He posits ways in which structures of power operating in Western society since the Enlightenment, founded as they are upon the 'progressive' discourses of science and reason, have subjected madness and the mad to mediation, distortion and suppression. This need to confine and control, Foucault suggests, is manifest in historical events such as the birth of the asylum and the gradual increase in power of the figure of the doctor and psychiatrist.

This thesis is not, in the first instance, a general critique of modern culture and does not, therefore, take such thought as central to its methodology. The thesis does, however, engage with this mode of cultural critique where it has a bearing upon texts that may be construed, in their use of madness, as in some way founded in the anti-psychiatric tradition. Socio-cultural criticism which uses madness in its critique may also be seen partly as the legacy of R. D. Laing's popular hypothesis that schizophrenia is not an illness but the adaption of an individual's psyche to a dysfunctional society. This Laingian view has been widely influential

with regard both to later fiction and critical readings of texts which represent mental trauma. The investigation of madness as a form of cultural critique is, as a result, mainly treated in this study in relation to mid- to late twentieth-century literature.

Within the domain of specifically literary criticism, Lillian Feder's broad-ranging study of the history of madness from ancient Greece through to the twentieth century (*Madness in Literature*) perhaps best exemplifies the combinative, eclectic approach mentioned above as one of the major methodologies used in the analysis of madness in fiction. Feder sets out to demonstrate that literary interpretations of madness,

both reflect and question medical, cultural, political, religious, and psychological assumptions of their time, that they explore the very processes of symbolic transformation of these influences and disclose their psychic consequences in the minds of individual characters or personae (Feder 1980, 4).

Feder's subject, like Foucault's and Laing's, is, fundamentally, the nature of madness as a *social* product. Neither the very wide historical ambition nor the primarily sociological impetus of Feder's work provide a model for the following study, which nevertheless belongs to a literary critical tradition which takes an interest in the range and extent of states of consciousness which a text can represent.

On the other hand, criticism that starts from the psychological analysis of *characters* (the tacit basis of much traditional criticism), rather than from its own diagnosis of madness as social disorder, often contributes more to the elaboration of a richly textured and constant 'human nature' rather than to the project of understanding the 'literary' or textual processes involved in the presentation of psychological disruption. This kind of criticism is not entirely appropriate for the analysis of 'modernist' or 'post-modernist' works which set out to challenge precisely

such literary constructs as 'character', and to question the integrity of the conventional human subject. For these reasons, again, such a method was not wholly suitable for this study.

Another critical tactic, based on interest in authors known to have undergone psychotic experience and the 'resulting' psychotic qualities of their literary creations, draws upon the biographical dimension available to psychological criticism. A good example of this strategy at work is that of Gordon Claridge's *Sounds from the Bell Jar: Ten Psychotic Authors* (1990). Claridge seeks to equate the recorded psychic experience of the authors who are his subjects with elements of their published literary work, speculating as to the links between the individual psychosis and the roots of creativity. This seemed, for my purposes, to move analysis too far in the direction of conjecture as to the mental state of the author. Such a strategy makes tenuously substantiated claims, on the basis of its findings, as to the direct connections between the recorded mental state of the author and the form taken by their work. Sight is lost, in the process of such analysis, of the status of narrative productions as governed equally by textual convention as by individual control.

Psychoanalytic literary criticism (which must include the work of Freud himself, the classic example of which is perhaps Ernest Jones's Freudian analysis of Hamlet, 1954) may set out to appropriate either the fictional character or the author as 'patient', the screen upon which to reinscribe the complex findings and constructions of this kind of clinical discourse. More recently, and with more sophistication, such criticism has sought to explore the links between 'madness' and 'literature' as they are forged in the relationship between 'psyche' and 'text'. Evelyne Keitel's *Reading Psychosis: Readers, Texts and Psychoanalysis* (1989) suggests that a

new genre may be identified in contemporary literature, definable as 'psychopathography'. Combining aspects of psychoanalytical thought with reader-response criticism (specifically that developed by Wolfgang Iser) Keitel works toward an understanding of the psychic processes which emerge in the act of reading the psychopathography and argues that these recreate the psychotic emotional state presented in the text. Although this thesis does consider texts as constructs that involve the process of reception (a recognition which is not typical of early psychoanalytic criticism), its methodology remains rooted not in psychoanalytical but in narrative theory.

Approaching the subject of madness from a different angle again, drawing upon both recent philosophy and psychoanalysis, Shoshana Felman in *Writing and Madness* sets out to formulate the question that literature, 'from its unique position, invites us to ask and that, from its unique position, it addresses to psychiatry, psychoanalysis, biology and linguistics' (1985, 254). Felman takes as her subjects both fictionists and post-structuralist theoreticians, constructing a dialogue between them which reveals ways in which fiction and theory are engaged in deploying mutually informative uses of madness as a performative utterance rather than as a stable signifier. Through this pioneering endeavour certain literary texts become junctures for connecting specialized but divergent theoretical discourses, in order to generate another discourse which is concerned with the process of meaning production as it transcends the isolated literary text.

The paradigms for the study of the literature of madness mentioned above are all, of course, important as antecedents to this study. However, I will neither be founding my discussion upon biographical evidence of the

'madness' of an author, nor starting from the language, logic and objectives of any discipline (the subject of which would only incidentally be literature) which would shift the focus of this thesis away from its emphasis on narrative. Nevertheless, the ground broken and the perspectives opened by several of the above writers, and related works, have been of enormous value in the writing of this study.

I am interested in charting historically the narrative strategies that are used in fictional texts which 'give an account of' madness, and in the ways in which *writing* about abnormal psychological states enacts a process of transcribing the elusive and complex notion of madness. I wish to do this in a manner which does not begin by accounting for madness itself. My central proposition in this thesis is the idea that there are connections between certain kinds of narrative technique and the kinds of psychological disturbance presented in fiction. In order to gain sufficient latitude within which to differentiate efficiently between texts I am undertaking the investigation of texts across a historical period which allows clear distinctions to be made in terms of the changing modes of narration. Such works will, in turn, be viewed in the context of contemporary attitudes to, and conceptions of 'madness'.

Using 'Madness'

Any discussion of madness in literature which situates itself outside of a semi-biographical, a specific philosophical or a psychoanalytical perspective (each itself embedded in a particular social and historical context) must contend with the historical relativity of the term, its existence within a diachronic mode. Although readers have some idea as to what we understand by it, 'madness' turns out to be a cipher, a signifier,

the signified of which shifts as the word is itself shifted from one (linguistic, clinical, social, ideological, cultural, historical) context to another. There are some commonly held threads in this maze. Most current dictionaries, for example, will supply a variety of meanings for the word. These often emphasise its romantic connotations, ranging from the loss of reason, through manifestations of 'wild recklessness' to 'extravagant passion'. Unless used in the latter, somewhat metaphorical manner, the word 'madness' has become rather archaic, due perhaps to the fact that it has been abandoned by clinical vocabulary. The fact that formally it is generally acceptable to call a person 'insane' (literally - unhealthy) or 'mentally ill', but unacceptable to call such a person 'mad', is indicative of this shift in the nature of the term. The *OED* points out that 'the word has always had some tinge of contempt or disgust'; it ignores the romantic attraction of the term, but adds that the word madness 'would now be quite inappropriate in medical use, or in referring sympathetically to an insane person as the subject of an affliction'.

However, within a literary context, madness of a sort that does not necessarily denote illness, but a kind of visionary or 'higher consciousness', has traditionally proved productive as an idea or metaphor for writers engaged in exploring and interrogating their culture's imaginal borderlands. This has been the case at least since Dante's journey from darkness to enlightenment in *The Divine Comedy*. Shakespeare's representations of psychic extremity in *Hamlet* and *King Lear* raise the main protagonists' level of awareness beyond that of the other characters in the drama. Exceptional or visionary states of consciousness are central to Romantic ideology, to which Wordsworth's *Prelude* (1799), for example, bears witness ('Some call'd it madness - such indeed it was...If prophesy

be madness; if things viewed/ By poets of old time...May in these tutored days no more be seen/ With undisorder'd sight', III, 147-155). The poetry of Blake, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley is similarly impatient of what they saw as the general acceptance of a psychological range of experience which was far too limited and limiting. A related use of madness is still present in much twentieth century literature (of a kind which is the subject of this study). The links between madness and genius, psychological disorder and creativity, are among the folkloric foundations upon which, historically, literary movements (Romanticism¹, Surrealism²) and theoretical approaches (psychoanalytical and cultural criticism) have been constructed.

From the middle of the eighteenth century, a focus upon madness and the irrational became a preoccupation in certain kinds of fiction, and this development is widely interpreted as a reaction against Enlightenment rationalism. Where Romantic poetry manifests a preoccupation with recognising and unleashing the most potent and enigmatic capacities of the imagination, the early Gothic novel (works, for example, by Ann Radcliffe, Clara Reeve, Horace Walpole, M. G. Lewis and C. R. Maturin) took this reaction deep into the realm of nightmare, moral outrage and perversity. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), a notable later example of this literary concerns may be seen as a critique of rationalist *hubris*, presenting the obsessed scientist justly pursued by his monstrous nemesis.

However, the project will not start with a generalized analysis of types of literary uses of madness, whether as revelation, imaginational release or illness, but from the treatment of madness with regard to the integrity of the perceiving self as it is presented in a particular narrative discourse. For example, in *The Divine Comedy* (to cite a text which historically precedes the scope of this study), Dante may be said to

have been working within a world where exceptional psychic experience was still widely regarded as a mystical condition in which human consciousness potentially partakes of the divine, a state productive of truth and, paradoxically, reason. Though extraordinary, such experience does not threaten the constancy of the self within a God-centred world-view. Combining figuratively in his own person the usually distinctive roles of author, narrator and protagonist, Dante spoke from the late Medieval position not of a madman but of a prophet. His visionary experience is not presented as the occasion of a displacement of self, his narrative identity remains intact, bridging the abyss between the 'real' world and the 'other' world. The nature and significance of Hamlet's madness, on the other hand (whether 'real' or 'pretended'), registers a new conceptual complexity, turning upon the Renaissance questioning of the boundaries of 'the self'. Within this paradigm madness is less likely to be disclosure than invasion. Hamlet plays upon the uncertainty as to where those boundaries should be drawn:

...What I have done
That might your nature, honour, and exception,
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it then? His madness. If't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
(Act V, scene ii, 1.176-185)

This argument about accountability, rooted in the question of the subject's identity with his irrational or criminal behaviour, was still of the utmost social importance as the nineteenth-century began². It remains so today in the domain of legal proceedings, though the reliance of this argument upon a possible clear distinction between sanity and insanity has, since

its inception, been questionable⁴. The question of the constancy of the self when subject to psychic disturbance seems to present interesting difficulties for the writer of nineteenth-century fiction, who may exploit this uncertainty in experimenting with the relation between narrative perspective and the presentation of character and event. The problematic relation between the integral self and madness is raised and explored in the texts examined in this study: James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), Edgar Allan Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838), Robert Louis Stevenson's 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' (1886).

These texts are viewed in the light of the emergent study of the mind as a substantial intellectual discipline. In the course of the nineteenth century, madness, whilst retaining its poetic fascination, apparently undergoes a process of alteration with regard to its treatment in literature. Recurrent narrative configurations demonstrate the extent to which it represents a challenge to the ability of rational discourse to account for it. The work of Sigmund Freud is often taken to mark a modern weakening of the general sense of the 'otherness' of madness, and its incorporation within the normal psychic mechanics of the self (however relative the term 'normal' may be). An index of the extent of Freud's influence in this normalization of madness arises in the fact that it has become difficult to think of *Hamlet* without being influenced by Ernest Jones's mediation of the reading of the play through the Oedipus complex. Freud's theory of the 'civilized' individual's traumatic psychological growth to maturity defeats Hamlet's politic defence, playing as this does upon the fundamental separateness of madness from a rational and inviolate self.

Significantly, madness is not a term that is used frequently in Freud's vocabulary. The words that replace it (neurosis, psychosis, hysteria) point to particular forms of dysfunction which can be located within 'normal' psychic mechanisms. From this perspective, the accepted view of insanity may be thought of as moving from something of supernatural, or unnatural origin (and therefore alien to the self, the body and society) into something that has, by stages, been assimilated as a *natural object* within the discourses of knowledge which seek to define and interpret that self and that body. Clinically, madness has been, to some extent, relieved of its 'otherness'. Features of this conceptual change which moves madness from an enigmatic to a more 'domesticated' status are significant for this thesis. Narrative presentations of madness in the twentieth century must be examined in the context of this substantive shift in the account given of the self in relation to madness.

In this era madness may still be used 'poetically' in fictional texts to denote the extraordinary or exceptional, but it has lost some part of its potency as a sign of that which exceeds knowledge or reason and threatens the maintenance of order. 'Madness' will be employed here, in its most general modern sense, to indicate states involving a loss of psychic equilibrium, as they are found to be represented in fiction. The 'use' made of madness by the writers in question, as examined in this thesis, will depend upon the discursive presentation of such experience in the text, and the extent to which this effects narrative procedure, or indeed becomes an effect of narrative procedure.

It is the concern of this thesis, as I have said, to examine the narrative techniques of fictional texts within a diachronic framework. In the nineteenth century, exceptional psychic experience is the subject of an

intellectually marginalized fictional genre often referred to as 'gothic' (in opposition to 'realist', which avoids the unfamiliar in the quest for verisimilitude). The texts chosen as a focus for analysis in part I may be termed 'gothic' and deal with such experience in ways connected to the conceptual schema outlined above. In these works madness is often apparently aligned with the supernatural, but not in any straightforward way. A profound ambiguity about locating the internal or the external origin of troubling phenomena gives rise to characteristic narrative structures and dynamics. In this study I will explore the elements and implications of the oblique procedures of these texts, which mark a historical boundary between the treatment of madness as perilously and challengingly 'other' and less diacritical post-Freudian explorations of aberrant psychological states.

Later treatments of exceptional psychic experience examined here include Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), Beckett's *Watt* (1953) and *The Unnamable* (1953, translated in 1959) and Jeanne Hyvrard's *Mother Death* (1976, translated in 1988). These texts do not display either the ambivalence or the peculiar textual dynamics intrinsic to the earlier works. While a firmer location of madness in the exceptional mind of a central protagonist is in some sense achieved, transformations in narrative technique effect a distinct representation of madness which is ultimately antithetical to earlier treatments of the topos.

Madness and Narrative

To look now at the issue of narrative representation, an etymological juncture at the root of the verb 'to narrate' (derived from the Latin 'gnarus', knowing) links the experience or perception of phenomena to

knowing how to account for it. This link involves not merely the linear process of mind working upon matter, or subject upon object that is implied by the definition but also a hermeneutic circuit or psycho-textual economy constitutive of the capacity to generate homeostasis (which may be thought to require hypothetically constant forms of self and world). The literary convention of 'narrator' can be viewed as the embodiment of such a regulatory and interpretive psychic mechanism. Narrative is, in a sense, the expression of a fundamental ordering principle. Narration can be seen to function as a representation of an essentially cognitive activity. It does not only give an account of, but recognises or represents it, and is, in a profound sense, constitutive of experience. In the same way, perhaps, as the Cartesian narrative - *ego cogita ergo sum* - does not just give an account of consciousness but 'knows' it in the sense of 'creates' it for itself - represents it to the mind without it being necessary for it to refer to an *a priori* truth.

However, traditional 'realist' narratives, and those narratives examined in part I which mimic - perhaps even ultimately parody - basic realist conventions, rely for their effect upon the temporary collusion of the reader with the supposition that narration involves an observing mind (personal or impersonal) giving an account of experience and events which have an existence beyond and independent of the means of representation. The internal coherence of the narrative appears to confirm its epistemological status as the representation of 'real events in the real world', which obey agreed laws of cause and effect. It also attests to the shared ability of narrator and narratee⁵, and by extension writer and reader - the observing mind - to comprehend and organize ('read') phenomena.

One of the distinctive aspects of the nineteenth-century texts examined in part I is that they may involve more than one narrator. Several narrators may produce several more or less discontinuous accounts of the same events. This causes different kinds of disturbance; for example, the restoration of internal coherence of the plot may become the precondition for the renewal of narrator/narratee as reliable cognitive categories. This destabilization seems to generate compensatory meta-narrative processes (both intradiegetic and extradiegetic, see note 5). Making connections and 'discovering' the plot take on an extraordinary importance on different textual levels. This process may be dramatized and exacerbated on the level of narration, for example, in terms of a narrator's conjecture as to the origin of an 'unknowable' (supernatural or psychopathic) experience. In turn, this kind of conjecture becomes a main function of the narratee.

This study argues in part I that the exceptional emphasis upon working to achieve a coherent plot bears similarity to mechanisms in force in the paranoid state of mind. These mechanisms are explored in chapter 1, where Todorov's narratological theorization of the gothic text supplies an initial point of reference. He argues that it is the *resolution* of a profound hesitation as to the reality status of events in a text that constitutes the moment at which a text 'becomes' gothic. This hypothesis frames the analysis of a text that has been accepted and discussed as the *locus classicus* of paranoid writing (I will say more about this below).

The argument builds toward the identification of a kind of textuality that may be designated 'paranoid'. In a reworking of Todorov's idea it is suggested that the damage done in the process of narration to the operation of the cognitive function might elicit one of two responses in

the reader: the acceptance of what amounts to a 'negative capability', or the development of a 'hyper-positive' or 'paranoid' capability. The former is rendered problematic because it runs counter to the signalled processes of the texts to be examined. The latter, an essentially reparational activity, characteristically relies upon the heightened operation of binary logic, which is comparable again to paranoid thought mechanisms.

The peculiar salience of this logic is posited as integral to the narrative process in these texts. Postmodern theory emphasizes the idea that dualism is the basis upon which Enlightenment epistemology and positivism is constructed (Foucault, for example, has argued that madness was positioned as the 'other' of reason in the eighteenth century, and therefore was that upon which the Enlightenment project of rationality was founded). The challenge that both madness and the supernatural present to rational ideals and modes of thought may be seen to be demonstrated and enacted in these texts. Paranoid texts involve a variously impaired narrational or 'knowing' process which provokes a distinctive mode of thinking. The deployment of a cognitively destabilized (if not explicitly 'mad') narrator is a significant feature of this type of writing. It may be said to contribute, under otherwise conventional narrative conditions, to the release of paranoid reading processes into the text.

Part II proposes that, under different narrative conditions, the effect of such instability will alter. Some modernist texts, for example, may be said to inherit in a more radical form the processes that are problematized in the earlier texts. The reconstructive imperative notable in the texts discussed in part I is, it seems, replaced (or displaced) in the works under consideration in part II by gradations of a 'discursively' disordered or interrogative narrative process. Since these texts refuse to

establish unquestioningly the grounds signalled in the earlier narratives (the agreement that there is a stable external reality to be recorded, and this record governed by a stable narrator-function; the subject/object dichotomy), the exposure of the more or less chaotic and productive processes of the mind — and consequently of language — provokes no reciprocal synthesizing activity from the narratee. In a sense, it is the disruption of the *discours* rather than the *récit* which characterizes these texts. With this in mind, I will examine these fictions under the heading of 'schizoid' texts, by analogy to schizoid mental states. Such states can be diagnosed via the identification of disordered discourse², and analysis of the texts will be preceded by a discussion of fundamental ideas in this field.

In line with the early twentieth-century preoccupation with the limitations of subjective experience (which occludes the coherence of an external reality), textual disruption is more emphatically focused in the means of representation rather than in that which is to be represented or 'known'. This may involve the employment of a narrator (or narrative viewpoint) manifestly unable to function adequately as such, a narrator whose experience is so disjunctive as to disable its own representation. The ideas of writers engaged in research into schizophrenic discourse and the mechanics of language (for example, those of Émile Benveniste) will be drawn upon here in order to open a perspective upon the discursive procedures of these narratives.

Part II moves on from the analysis of early 'modernist' presentations of madness, to texts which engage in a more radical fashion with the precarious interface between language, subjectivity and representation. Theoretical points of reference include the work of Jean Jacques Lecercle

on language, Raymond Federman's proposals with regard to *avant-garde* writing, the ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (their theorization of 'minor literatures') and theories of feminine writing. At this stage the thesis is interested in demonstrating the manner in which the fiction under discussion allegorizes or exhibits schizoid mechanisms and motifs. Further, it suggests ways in which this situates the works in the context of wider theoretical concerns. Ihab Hassan noted, for example, the precedential nature of Beckett's work, saying, in *The Dismemberment of Orpheus*, that Beckett was 'a supreme example of the postmodern artist, turning the malice of language against itself' (1982, 210). The discursive proximity of theoretical representations of postmodernist procedures to psychiatric representations of psychosis will be further pursued in the conclusion of the thesis.

Before the focus widens in this way, however, the study goes on to examine how the presentation of madness in fiction may be used politically, by going beyond challenging conventional modes of narration, perception and representation. The final chapter of part II involves the close comparative analysis of two schizoid texts (Beckett's *Unnamable* and Hyvrard's *Mother Death*) which may be seen to deploy disrupted discourse and motifs of madness in the interests of achieving different, and arguably opposed, ends. *Mother Death* introduces a specifically political deployment of the *topos* of madness. It is argued that the schizoid condition has become a metaphor accommodating critical and theoretical thought from very different domains, and with potentially conflicting agendas. The issue of whether politically motivated writing is finally undermined in the deployment of this metaphor is addressed.

Summary of Method and Structure

The schematic deployment of particular texts in relation to spatialized distinctions that describe specific narrative procedures is viewed as requisite for the construction of an operable theoretical framework. In effect, the texts discussed as 'paranoid' or 'schizoid' should be understood to partake of elements of both paranoid and schizoid textuality, operating as they do at the limits of narrative endeavour. These terms ultimately describe functions of integration and of disruptive procedures which may be identified at work within the narrative economy of any literary text. They can also be seen as simultaneously opposed and inseparable modes of narrative procedure. The diachronic organization of the study is also for heuristic purposes, and will not be insisted upon. The typological emphasis of the thesis must eventually take precedence over the imposition of a rigid historical framework. The unique, *avant-garde* or retrograde elements within a text are preserved alongside its status as a historically confined discursive product. Nineteenth-century modes of thought and narration cannot be thought to have ceased during the twentieth century; likewise, the experimental techniques and intellectual concerns of the twentieth century cannot be thought to have had no earlier precedents. The inclusion of the study of a mid nineteenth-century text by Melville at the beginning of part II ('Bartleby the Scrivener', 1856), followed by Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892), derives from my intention to avoid a structure that is overly schematic, foreshadowing as these texts do much later treatments of madness.

The formal method of inquiry is cumulative, and functions upon several levels. In order to provide a constructive analogue or 'control' in this investigation of fictional treatments of madness, part I commences

with the narratological analysis of a work written by a (clinically diagnosed) psychotic author which has achieved the status of a classic within psychiatric, psychoanalytical and even recent cultural theory; this work is D. P. Schreber's *Memoirs of my Nervous Illness* (1903)⁷.

Schreber's *Memoirs* is treated, as far as possible, as a text which is open to investigation for its narrative procedures (rather than in terms of extant psychoanalytical readings). To my knowledge, there is no precedent for this kind of approach to the work. There are, of course, some difficulties involved in transforming what has hitherto properly been the subject of clinical analysis into the subject of literary analysis. The text moves into the literary domain encumbered and written over by a discourse which situates the text as object, as available for scrutiny but as having nothing to say to 'the sane' on our own terms. When viewed as the dysfunctional noises of madness, the product of a *patient*, the emphasis is necessarily upon the atypical and deviant in Schreber's writing, rather than upon those aspects which derive from conventional communicational and conceptual procedures. In a clinical context the onus would be upon the reader to discover what characterises the patient's discourse as psychologically impaired, and what features might function as an index to the nature and origin of that impairment. At the risk of placing insufficient emphasis upon the eccentricity of Schreber's text, however, I will be exploring it for what it reveals with regard to its deployment of narrative conventions.

Analysis of the fictional texts in part I will refer back to this first chapter. In part II, fictional narratives will be investigated with regard to patterns and issues which emerge out of this discussion, and also with regard to their contemporary conceptual context⁸. Parts I and II

will be prefaced by a fuller introduction to the terminology and premises behind the detailed examination of the selected works.

Finally, the project will be situated in relation to current critical practice. Discussion will take up the issue of recent literary trends involving the use of ideas about madness, which suggest its current centrality to the ways in which writers describe, prescribe and understand the 'modern' and 'post-modern' self and world. My interest at this point is not only in fiction, but also in the increasing critical fascination with psychological terminology. Critics ranging from Lionel Trilling⁹, Frederick Jameson¹⁰, to Christine Brooke-Rose¹¹, have all identified what Georg Lukács once called an 'obsession' with psychopathology in modern literature¹². There appears to have been a growing consensus regarding the significance of aspects of psychopathology across fiction and related writings, the progress of which seems nevertheless to have remained uncharted to date. References in criticism to links between extraordinary psychic states and particular kinds of writing sometimes appear to be made in passing. Beyond the frequent intimation of psychopathology's importance, any concurrence seems to dissolve. What, for example, might Terry Eagleton mean when he speaks of a consensus that the typical post-modern artefact is 'schizoid'?¹³. What are the precise evidence and thinking that lead to the observation made by Shoshana Felman that 'madness has currently become a *common discursive place*'¹⁴?

Fictional interest in 'madness' since the nineteenth century seems to have been situated at the frontiers of an ongoing literary preoccupation with the exploration of the psyche¹⁵. Those texts forming the basis for analysis in this thesis demonstrate a fascination with the obscure, subterranean realms within the self, and also with the power of language

to evoke states which offer access to these. Further, the way in which textual madness functions is, first of all, not only as the instrument of the literary exploration of extreme emotional states or the tapping of the springs of creativity, but also as a means of transgressing the boundaries between sanity and insanity. This correlates with a deeper cultural shift regarding the apprehension of madness. The period which limits the scope of this study is crucial in its radical transitional nature with regard to concepts of fundamental import for the novel form: most particularly, ideas of the 'self' and ideas of 'reality', as objectively stable or as subjective, illusory, even fictive. For the fictional articulation of these, the topos of 'madness' serves as the ultimate measure.

PART I: PARANOID FICTION

INTRODUCTION: MADNESS AND GOTHIC TEXTS

Views differ as to what constitutes a gothic text. And more hypotheses have developed around the enigma of 'madness'. Yet it is in the juxtaposition of these, in the unsettling effect engendered in reading by the evocation of exceptional states of consciousness in works that have been called 'gothic', that the peculiar textual force of the latter lies.

Those texts to which I shall be referring have in common not only the presentation of apparently 'supernatural' phenomena — not perhaps sufficient in itself for designating a text as gothic — but the supernatural as the focus of interrogation, as the site of 'dis'ease or radical uncertainty. Manifestations of the supernatural, whether or not explicable as psychotic delusion, place both the integrity of 'self' and the world inhabited by that self in jeopardy. The gothic quality of these texts may be understood to reside in a particular form of anxiety'.

Vital contributions to the gothic debate are those launched by Tzvetan Todorov and David Punter. Todorov sees the gothic text partly as a temporal construct arising out of the reading process. He suggests that traditional gothic literature often adheres to his definition of 'the fantastic' only until it is resolved in one of two possible ways, at which point it actually becomes gothic:

The fantastic...lasts only as long as a certain hesitation: a hesitation common to reader and character, who must decide whether or not what they perceive derives from 'reality' as it exists in the common opinion. At the story's end, the reader makes a decision even if the character does not; he opts for one solution or the other, and thereby emerges from the fantastic. If he decides that the laws of reality remain intact and permit an explanation of the phenomenon described, we say that the work belongs to another genre: the uncanny. If, on the contrary, he decides that new laws of nature must be entertained to account for the phenomena, we enter the genre

of the marvellous (1975, 41).

He proposes that we are generally able to 'distinguish, within the literary gothic, two tendencies: that of the supernatural explained...and that of the supernatural accepted' (ibid., 43). Punter stands in opposition to Todorov in that he understands the peculiar nature of gothic literature to be rooted in its fascination with, and psychological expression of, ongoing and *unresolved* conflicts predominant in the social context of such writing. Punter sees, it seems, Todorov's moment of hesitation indefinitely extended due to the interrelation between text and context. Todorov finds the gothic to be limited, generically and historically; Punter recognizes transformations of the form in much later literature. I would follow Punter's example both in locating the moment of gothic anxiety in the point of conflict or hesitation rather than resolution, and in pushing back the definitive boundaries of the genre. It seems to me that since its insurgence, though themes and motifs may have undergone a superficial transformation, gothic narrative has been sustained by the continued presence of 'taboo' in the Western psyche - those things which as Punter points out are both 'sacred' and 'unclean', which 'resist conventional explication', and arouse fear and fascination (1980, 410). Madness must occupy a prominent place in that category.

Although Todorov also notes that 'the sentiment of the uncanny originates...in certain themes linked to more or less ancient taboos' (1975, 48), he is dismissive of the critical association of gothic fiction with fear. There are several conditions upon which a text may be considered fantastic. The first, the idea that 'the fantastic produces a particular effect on the reader - fear, or horror, or simply curiosity - which the other genres or literary forms cannot provoke' (ibid., 92), he argues

against, saying 'we shall not concern ourselves here with the first function of the fantastic, for it derives from a psychology of reading quite alien to the strictly literary analysis we are undertaking'. If we take such criticism seriously, he concludes, 'a work's genre depends on the sang-froid of its reader' (1975, 35). What then if, as he seems to say, it depends upon the reader's peculiar need to bring about a resolution of contradictory elements by discovering/constructing a system of thought which will accommodate them? This suggests that a work's genre rests equally upon the reader's desire for tidiness. Conversely, David Punter proposes that 'exploring Gothic is also exploring fear' (1980, 21); 'Gothic fiction has, above all, to do with terror'. He concludes that it is founded upon perplexity of the kind that Todorov feels must be resolved - evoking responses akin to paranoia:

It seems to me impossible to make much sense out of Gothic fiction without continual recourse to the concept of paranoia. Many writers...can appropriately be seen as contributors to what we might call 'paranoiac fiction', fiction in which the reader is placed in a situation of ambiguity with regard to fears within the text (1980, 101).

There is, then, an apparent discrepancy here with regard to the place of fear, and the function of ambiguity in gothic fiction. We have two contrasting theories of the gothic; one which dismisses the presence and arousal of fear on critical grounds and enlists the idea of resolution (a text becomes gothic rather than fantastic only through the participation of the reader in its 're/writing'), and one which engages with the idea of fear and focusses upon unresolved ambiguity. Todorov believes that gothic literature becomes such when the reader formulates an opinion as to the extent of a narrative's conformity with the laws of reality; Punter suggests that the gothic writer insists that 'realism' is not 'the whole

story: the world, at least in some aspects, is very much more inexplicable – or mysterious, or terrifying, or violent than that' (1980, 407).

Both, however, concede that an element of perplexity as to the reality status of events on the part of the reader as well as the central protagonist is involved. Todorov points out that this perplexity is most successfully created when the narrator is also a character or witness of events (1975, 86). As narrator, the speaker is invested by the reader with a certain amount of authority; as character witnessing supernatural or irrational events the speaker may be suspected of madness in the interest of the reader's desire to 'rationalise' such problematic phenomena. What he calls 'the psychology of reading' is not, I would suggest, a factor that can be considered separately from an analysis of the texts concerned here. Todorov does in fact rely heavily upon a different kind of effect that narratives must have upon the reader in order to fulfill their function as 'fantastic' when he says that 'the fantastic is based essentially on a hesitation of the reader – a reader who identifies with the chief character – as to the nature of an uncanny event' (1975, 157). There is a contradiction apparent in differentiating between the two kinds of reading-effect; I would suggest that they are connected and that both may be inscribed within the content and structure of a text.

The term 'diagnosis' might be used to describe my approach here, though rather than offering a clinical analysis of a character or of the 'reader' I am attempting to locate common characteristics *symptomatic* of something that differentiates these works from other works – their having a noticeably more 'disturbing' quality. However, one of the texts I shall be looking at has before been 'diagnosed', in the orthodox sense of the word – the *Memoirs* of Daniel Paul Schreber. This is a work that has

achieved the status of a classic within psychiatric disciplines. I propose that there are ways in which the *Memoirs* may be considered a paradigm of a species of text which might, to an extent, demonstrate a reconciliation of both Todorov's and Punter's suggestions.

Schreber's story was understood by Sigmund Freud to furnish proof that its author conformed to his idea of a paranoiac. Schreber's *Memoirs* has since been the focus of analysis from both a clinical and a literary theoretical perspective². Its literary status could be considered that of 'autobiography', or of a unique kind of gothic fiction, if the author's sanity were not in question; historically it is more than in question, and thus perhaps the text has no 'literary' status. Yet Schreber's narrative technique derives from, or possesses elements in common with those of the fictionalists I have mentioned. Freud, who was convinced of Schreber's psychosis, had only the text and not the man (contrary to the accustomed situation of psychoanalysis) for the purposes of his diagnosis³. The grounds for his diagnosis of a text, rather than of a person, are relevant to this discussion, in that the paranoiac's psychosis is structured, according to Freud, in a way that permits of no intervention or manipulation by an analyst. The paranoiac will 'only say what they choose to say, and it follows that this is precisely a disorder in which a written report or printed case history can take the place of personal acquaintance' (1979, 138). The paranoiac individual inhabits his own complex and pre-established narrative so thoroughly that the analyst is left disabled.

Schreber's text partakes of the characteristics of Todorov's fantastic fiction; it is riven with perplexity. It also meets Punter's description of a kind of text which presents and evokes terror, and might be called 'paranoiac fiction'. It is a narrative of which the narrator is also a

character and whose authority/insanity is an issue foregrounded by the narrator himself. The kind of fear evoked is partly Schreber's own fear of insanity, and simultaneously of persecution by agents of unknown ontological status. The supernatural is thrown into doubt by Schreber's own insistence upon its 'naturalness'. This is founded upon his production of a fictional 'reality' which will accommodate his experience as natural, or at least undermines those mechanisms essential to the decision-making process whereby something comes to be considered 'supernatural', or somebody 'insane'. Schreber appears to be addressing and challenging a reader who would not normally separate insanity from the perception of supernatural phenomena.

Frequently loosely enlisted in the interpretation of the kind of texts that are called 'gothic', the concept of paranoia is not unequivocal; signification shifts between contexts. Strictly this word applies now to a form of psychosis (since the Schreber case was found by Freud to be its prototype). It is also associated with a peculiar operation of reason or logic. This study builds upon the collapsing of such contexts inferred by criticism, in order to identify and to some extent validate a possible point of contiguity. Todorov's critical resolution essentially involves the reader's spontaneous re-construction of the narrative's plot. Both Punter and Todorov emphasise the peculiar operation of the 'plotting' mechanism in gothic literature. Punter believes that for gothic writers 'complexity of plotting was necessary, because it was only for them that the process of suspense and release was an essential fictional mechanism' (1980, 16). Todorov cites (in support of his own observations) Poe's emphasis upon composition and 'pre-established design' as exemplary of his 'theory of plot' in fantastic narrative (1975, 86-88). The creation of plot also, as I

will attempt to demonstrate, is an essential constituent of Schreber's paranoia. Schreber's *Memoirs* will be treated as a prototypical example of the way in which fantastic or mad experience may be transmuted into narrative form.

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SCHREBER'S *MEMOIRS OF MY NERVOUS ILLNESS*: A MODEL

Schreber's Narrative

The *Memoirs* were published in 1903, after Schreber had spent eight years in an insane asylum. In his introduction to the work he explains why he began to write. He had decided to apply for release from the asylum, and felt it necessary that people he would have to encounter in the outside world should have some understanding of the beliefs that caused him to think and act in a certain way. He is of the opinion that a full understanding of his experience will *enlighten* them, that an essential lack in people's knowledge of the universe will be filled. He is not only concerned that they should not embarrass him by treating him as mad, he is trying to endow his exceptional experience with a status correspondent with his reader's sense of reality.

This is the purpose of this manuscript; in it I shall try to give an at least partly comprehensible exposition of supernatural matters, knowledge of which has been revealed to me for almost six years (1)'.

These memoirs are not, therefore, simply a history, an autobiographical account. They have a double subject, they record both Schreber's experience and the nature and progress of his 'illness'. They combine an attempt at a linear narrative with a speculative commentary that is (from a sceptical or psychiatric perspective) formative in his illness and a 'symptom' of his madness. Schreber's account draws upon both scientific and religious 'images and similes' (2) for the communication of what he believes happened to him, and in what terms it may be understood. In order to convince himself and other people that his experience is 'real'

(not the deluded imaginings of a diseased mind) Schreber decides that he must first change the conventional parameters of reality so that they encompass things that are otherwise considered unreal, or as real only within the domain of religious belief.

He precedes the exposition of his experience (in Chapters I to IV) with an account of how he now understands the universe to function, and describes this in terms of the 'Order of the World'. He outlines 'God's' relationship to human souls (alive and dead) and the human body when things are operating in accordance with the Order of the World. 'God'² and all created things material or immaterial are to be regarded as consisting in the stuff of 'rays' (*strahlen*), or 'nerves' (*nerven*) (Schreber 1972). 'Nerves' are an instance of a kind of conceptual thinking which breaks down dualisms such as real/unreal, mind/matter, inside/outside. They are both material and immaterial, they constitute both the human soul in its individuality and its continuity with the external world through the registering of 'vibrations'. The human soul is 'contained in the nerves of the body' (45) and they are the medium through which everything is sensed. When the body dies these go to heaven. Heaven is structured hierarchically, Schreber explains, and goes on to relate the history of the soul as it undergoes forms of purification and stratification.

God's interference in affairs outside of his heavenly jurisdiction is rare; after He had created everything, according to Schreber, God largely left the world 'to its own devices' (10) and merely provided sunlight to enable the continuation of life. However this 'miraculous structure' (*wundervollen Aufbau*) we are told has 'recently suffered a rent' (22). Somebody has committed 'soul murder' (*Seelenmord*). It is not at first clear who the murderer is, and Schreber professes himself unable to

'enlarge on the nature of soul murder' (58) (and the passage which follows this statement was omitted as unfit for publication). This attack on the nerves of (probably) his soul has occasioned a radical disturbance in the Order of the World. The nerve matter of God has become irrevocably attracted to the nerves of his body because of this damage and has thus been torn from heaven and his proper, central, overseeing and organizing place in the universe. Thus, Schreber reasons, the survival of the world has come to depend upon his own fate, God is neglecting His appropriate position by attaching Himself to one human being. Supernatural forces have intervened where they should not, the order of things has been upset. What would normally be considered 'out of this world' has become intimately involved in his own history.

Schreber then relates what happened to him (visions, the hearing of voices, 'compulsive' thinking, somatic disturbance, spatial and temporal disorientation, the fear that he is losing his reason) in terms of 'divine miracles' (*göttliche Wunder*). 'Divine miracles' fit into the narrative schema in that they arise at different stages of his struggle with God. In trying to get free of Schreber, God attacks his physical and mental well-being. God is involved in a conspiracy to bring about his 'unmanning' (*Entmannung*, which, as Samuel Weber points out in his introduction to the text, implies 'the removal from the category of men', as well as emasculation; Schreber 1988, 361). 'Unmanning' involves Schreber's transformation into the 'other', each the subject of taboo: physically he will be transformed into a woman, mentally, into a madman. God does not realize that by so doing, as Schreber says, he is making it more difficult for himself to escape the entanglement. Schreber, being actually more reasonable than God in this dis-ordered condition, sees that the survival

of the human race on the contrary now *depends* upon him becoming a woman and embracing God. Thus order has been disrupted on a cosmic scale. This elaborate imaginative construction has been understood, and still is, as a manifestation of Schreber's madness.

Schreber's Narrative Strategy

Schreber does not want to think he is mad, he does not think he is narrating madness, telling a story about madness or a mad story – and he does not want the reader of his text to think this either.

My aim is to show the reader that he is not only dealing with the empty figments of a poor mental patient's fantasy...but with results which are the fruit of many years' hard thinking and based on experiences of a very special kind not known to other human beings (241).

While he is writing he must therefore undertake various strategies that he believes will both destabilize the criteria for reading him as simply insane (produce a kind of aporia) and create different conditions, a new frame of reference, whereby his text is taken as a serious challenge to conventional patterns of thought. Schreber undertakes to problematize the difference between reason and madness, between what is objectively real and what the product of delusion, whilst proving himself capable of making such a differentiation; that is to say, sane.

One of these strategies involves speaking from different positions. Different Schrebers may be located as the source of the narrative voice in the *Memoirs*: the author (who is authoritative, socially respectable, educated, philosophical, sane) and the madman (who is 'nervously ill', tied to God, turning into a woman, and undergoing a Dantesque trial of supernatural experience which it is the duty of the other – Schreber as author – to reveal to the world). He relates, at one point, having felt

that he was two people;

I retain some recollections which I can only describe in a general way, to the effect that I felt as if I myself existed for some time also in a second, mentally inferior form...In this second inferior shape, in which I myself retain the conscious awareness of having had lesser intellectual powers, I was told that another Daniel Paul Schreber had existed before me (72-3).

Schreber isolates this experience as a confused memory, but this division, which is a precondition of the production of his text, is experienced in terms of problems in its exposition³.

To deal first then with the ('mentally superior') controlling voice: objectivity is accentuated in his text because apart from being autobiographical, his 'memoir' also constitutes a social defence (of his sanity) — it is 'accountable' for its own veracity⁴. This creates a tension around his 'authorial' position. The narrative 'I' needs to be established before it does anything else as an 'authority'. Schreber issues a direct challenge to his reader to accept that, contrary to expectation, he is entirely capable of a reasoned explanation of his experience, perhaps more so than his most exacting audience. He asserts:

If psychiatry is not flatly to deny everything supernatural and thus tumble with both feet into the camp of naked materialism, it will have to recognize the possibility that occasionally the phenomena under discussion may be connected with real happenings, which simply cannot be brushed aside with the catchword 'hallucination' (80)

He has a theory which attempts to forestall conventional objection and explains:

We are used to thinking all impressions we receive from the outer world are mediated through the five senses, particularly that all light and sound sensations are mediated through eye and ear...I receive light and sound sensations which are projected direct onto my inner nervous system (124, n61).

This constitutes an attempt by Schreber to control or 'frame' his text within the context of a thoroughgoing scientific treatise, though he admits

that it is not scientific according to contemporary thought. He proposes an alternative 'truth' or reality that may be rationally communicated.

Schreber devotes considerable attention to proving his scientific adequacy as the basis for establishing his *respectability* as narrator. In default of convincing his audience, he offers himself, his body, his madness, his text as an *object* intended for scientific observation and investigation, and initiates this process himself in his approach. The objective physicality of his body and his work will provide an unconventional kind of proof of the truth of his history:

I believe that expert examination of my body and observation of my personal fate during my lifetime would be of value both for science and the knowledge of religious truths. In the face of such considerations all personal issues must recede...(iii).

He attempts to use his body to conceal the fissure between natural and supernatural.

Respectability for him as a narrator also involves his dissociating himself from any idea that he may be a poet or his experience 'fictional' (the work of creative imagination and as such entirely subjective)⁵. Professor Flechsig (who treated him, and whom he believed to have 'secret designs' against him, 44), he tells us, must soon have realized that 'in me he was dealing with a human being of high intellect, of uncommon keenness of understanding and acute powers of observation' (35). At the beginning of Chapter 4 he asserts:

Whoever knew me intimately in my earlier life will bear witness that I had been a person of calm nature, without passion, clear-thinking and sober, whose individual gift lay more in the direction of cool intellectual criticism than in the creative activity of the unbounded imagination.

He also wishes to distance himself from the credulity of the religious believer,

I occupied myself too much with the natural sciences, particularly

with works based on the so-called modern doctrine of evolution, not to have begun to doubt, to say the least, the literal truth of all Christian teachings...(63-64).

In applying rational thought processes to delusion (science tends to have to consider religion as such) he already has a model. Contemporary thought had set up a conflict between the two which, if not resolved one way or another, could be thought of as resulting in a profound hesitation. As J. Hillis Miller has said of nineteenth century fiction, 'the battle amongst various forms of belief and unbelief was fought within each individual mind, or more precisely, within each individual text' (1963, 281). Schreber, however, sets about subsuming them into a third term - the cosmic order of his text; 'man must reconcile himself to the fact that things exist which are true although he cannot understand them' (2).

He is attempting to problematize the unreality of what he *perceives*. His text also undermines the sanity of the *perceiver*. However, the fact that he is able to be objective even about this contingency is disarming. Schreber institutes what may be seen as a 'splitting' mechanism in the production of his text. As a reader of his own experience he assumes a critical stance in relation to his 'insanity'. He speaks from a position that he recognizes is officially regarded as mad - a term which carries with it the inference that he should not be able to distinguish the real from the unreal, or the rational from the irrational. Yet he contrives to speak from outside of this mad self, in order to prove that he can make such a distinction. He gets 'out of his mind' (*para/noia*). The conditions of his writing are linked to the paradox of his madness.

However, the split is problematic from the moment of the inception of his narrative. He may be defeating his own cause by communicating subject matter of such an incredible nature that even he cannot be certain of its

veracity. His narrating 'I' already feels menaced by the disruptive potential of the other, which is a threat to the satisfactory completion of his plan. Schreber writes;

The difficulties are in part external and in part of an inner nature. In the first place in such an attempt I have to rely totally on memory, because at the time in question it was impossible to make notes; I had no writing material at my disposal, nor could I feel inclined to make written notes... Furthermore the impressions which rushed in upon me were such a wonderful mixture of natural events and happenings of a supernatural nature, that it is extremely difficult to distinguish mere dream visions from experiences in a waking state, that is to say to be certain how far all that I thought I had experienced was in fact historical reality...(65).

The 'I' is also split in terms of its location in time and space. The authorial narrator imposes temporal and spatial coordinates upon events that subjectively lacked this orientation. He does this in order to emphasize his present position of sanity. However, despite his attempt the narration of the onset and intensification of Schreber's illness is accompanied by a gradual loss of touch with temporal coordinates. Schreber wishes to give a faithful record of his experience but also to maintain his objectivity at the moment of writing (which is a prerequisite for enabling the former) and an odd conjunction occurs.

He begins with great attention to accuracy to establish the temporal framework of the progression of his illness;

The first of the two illnesses commenced in the autumn of 1884 and was fully cured at the end of 1885, so that I was able to resume work as Chairman of the County Court at Leipzig to which I had in the meantime been transferred on 1st January 1886. The second nervous illness began in October 1893 and still continues...(34).

From a position 'beyond' madness he speaks of a time when, though becoming deranged, his experience was still contingent upon the 'real' world and appropriates its measurements. As the story of his degeneration continues time is measured in days, nights, hours. By Chapter 6 time goes wild,

The period I have been trying to describe in the previous chapter -

from about the middle of March to the end of may 1894 - assuming always that it was really a matter of a few earthly months only and not of centuries...(63).

From here, time becomes slippery, confusing and irrelevant. Precision is used in a seemingly arbitrary way to pin down the duration of some particular hallucination to 'real' time and thus to reality. Spatially the 'nervously ill' Schreber is radically polarized between knowing that he is in an asylum of which he provides detailed ground plans, violently 'earthing' his narrative, and believing that he may not inhabit Earth at all,

I lived for years in doubt as to whether I was still on earth or whether on some other celestial body. Even in the year 1895 I still considered the possibility of being on Phobos, a satellite of the planet mars...(76).

A further complication is contingent upon the difficulty of being truthful and believed to be so when he is working from recollection. Schreber recognizes that he is creating, despite his efforts, a supremely unreliable narrator, 'infected' by the vicissitudes of memory and time.

Conventionally, narration is a mode of writing which operates in the past tense and this kind of uncertainty need not be an issue. Present and past self must be split. However, Schreber's narrator is also split into 'sane' and 'insane' self in this way; unable to 'take notes' (mentally or literally) when undergoing 'supernatural' experience, he relates how a large part of his 'nervous illness' manifests itself in the constant disruption of thought and speech processes by supernatural means. It is in the nature of nerves that they 'must speak', they are defined through language, but they also, for Schreber, cause language to get out of control. It is difficult for his 'mad' self to write anything other than nonsense. It

follows that if his speech is orderly he is not mad, but if he cannot represent these verbal hallucinations in a scientific fashion then it is possible that he has not been sane all along and that one part of him is/was mad; *unless* — and this he constantly falls back upon — the knowledge gained from such experience is ineffable in the traditional sense of the visionary (this, for example, is Dante's position in the *Paradiso*). Thus, by the appeal to ineffability, one mode of distinguishing reason from unreason is undermined, rewritten by Schreber in the same moment as he recognizes the division.

The forefronting of the problem of representing abnormal experience in a normal and accessible manner disorients by indicating that the experience referred to is potentially 'real' because potentially narratable. The experience is no less true because it is *not* yet fully representable in writing. Yet, as Jacques Derrida has said of the act of writing,

By its essence the sentence is normal. It carries normality within it, that is, *sense*, in every sense of the word...It carries normality and sense within it and does so whatever the state, whatever the health or madness of him who propounds it, or who it passes through, on whom it is articulated. In its most impoverished syntax, *logos* is reason (1978, 54).

Schreber's instincts this far are sound — the act of writing immediately redeems madness from 'non-significant' chaos. In order to achieve its unsettling psychological effect the 'gothic' fictional treatment of madness, if it employs a deranged narrator, would need somehow to foreclose the awareness that normality of narrative form makes the subject's state of mind appear less than abnormal. For Schreber writing is also a mode of salvation. Schreber's preoccupation with language — uncontrolled in his illness and controlled in his narrative — is an index to the functioning of his psychosis; that language should 'pass through him', that he should

reconstruct himself in language is also part of reinstituting normality - reordering the world. As Freud says of the kind of activity that Schreber is involved in, building the memories of his hallucinations into a schema and a narrative, 'the delusional formation, which we take to be the pathological product, is really an attempt at recovery, a process of reconstruction' (1979, 209-210).

Schreber's Paranoid Logic

Connected to the difficulties Schreber encounters in his effort to create the appropriate conditions for narration, a critical splitting mechanism also works on an ideological level. Splitting or doubling of identity occurs in the form of an insistent dualism. Schreber's delusions are centred upon the oppositions rational/demented, God/man, and most importantly for him, man/woman. Critical thought commonly posits the hierarchical binary opposition as the very root of making sense ('its methodological primacy would alone indicate its place as a fundamental operation of human thought and thus of human semiotic systems', says Jonathan Culler, 1975, 15). The delusional content of Schreber's memoirs revolves increasingly around his relationship to God and God's desire to change him from a man into a woman in the cause of the salvation of the human race⁶. To Schreber, being 'unmanned' is a condition synonymous with the loss of reason. The subversion of the 'normal' hierarchy of oppositions plays an important part in the way in which Schreber presents and understands his derangement as the product of a disrupted world-order and the abnormal machinations of 'God', which it is up to Schreber alone to redress, to be 'reasonable' where *God* is irrational.

Normally God in His Sublimity retains priority over man, partly

Schreber suggests, by virtue of His elevated distance. However, in Schreber's case God has become 'tied to his person', brought down to, and below the level of humanity. Prior to this he has stated his view that the opposition man/woman, according to the orderly state of things, is hierarchical ('the male state of blessedness was superior to the female state', 18)7.

I feel I must protect the reader from possible misunderstanding. religiously minded people who are filled with the concept of God's omnipotence, omniscience and loving kindness must find it incomprehensible that God should here be depicted so lowly a Being that He can be surpassed both morally and mentally by one single being. However, I must emphasize that my superiority in both respects is to be understood in *the most relative sense*. I maintain such superiority *only* as it concerns the condition contrary to the Order-of-the-world...in this respect I am both more reasonable and the better part (155).

God's strange wish that Schreber become a woman at first seems to further upset the balance; it appears immoral and 'unclean' to Schreber. However, Schreber discovers that in order to reinstitute some form of balance he must submit - at least in part - to God's desire that he be changed into a woman.

Now I could see beyond doubt that the Order of the World imperiously demanded my unmanning, whether I personally liked it or not, and that therefore it was *common sense* that nothing was left but to reconcile myself to the thought of being transformed into a woman (177).

It is possible to see a rationale in Schreber's own terms for this transformation in that the sacrifice of his masculinity is a gesture toward the reinstatement of order through hierarchy. To become female is to solve the problem of God's reprioritization. If God has been reduced to the level of Schreber the man, then Schreber as woman reinstates Him as superior, and realigns himself as the subject of patriarchal ideology and a theology which places Eve in relation to Adam as Adam to God; or as Milton's *Paradise Lost* persuasively states, they were

Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd
For contemplation he and valour form'd,
For softness shee and sweet attractive grace,
Hee for God onely, she for God in him:
His fair large front declar'd absolute rule

(IV, 1.296-299, 1980, 222).

These hierarchically arranged attributes are very much part of Schreber's vision, where intellect characterizes masculinity, and 'voluptuousness' (*Wollust*) femininity. To become partly female ('I could always be playing the woman's part in sexual embrace with myself', 285) paradoxically also reasserts the stability of his own identity.

Schreber first recognizes the impulse toward transformation in terms of submission; he has the feeling that 'it must be really rather pleasant to be a woman submitting to intercourse' (36). The 'taboo' nature of his wish is in fact remembered by Schreber as a precursor to his breakdown. He begins to consider 'absolute passivity almost a religious duty' (127). Women achieve only an inferior level in Schreber's heaven because they are essentially sexual creatures, endowed with the 'soul-voluptuousness' (*Seelenwollust*) that God is now imposing on Schreber (who as a man possesses rather more intellectual nerves).

Culler's investigation of how psychoanalytic discourse echoes this man/woman relationship, helps to disclose how the forefronting of this opposition is implicated in Schreber's attempt at self-cure;

A deconstructive reading reveals that woman is not marginal but central and that the account of her 'incomplete sexuality' is an attempt to construct a male plenitude by setting aside a complexity that proves to be a condition of sexuality in general. The hierarchical opposition implies the identity of each term, and particularly the coherent self-identity of the male (1983, 171).

Paradoxically, the presence of God, the origin of this struggle, guarantees his sanity and his masculinity. God's presence also begins to demand the presence of His 'other' to accommodate him: that is, that Schreber become

feminine, develop 'voluptuousness'. Schreber then creates another self which is endowed with all the attributes that he understands to be feminine. This is a double self, a self which is conceived of as 'low' enough to place God high above him and separate, or simply 'other' in that he becomes his sexual other². Femininity as a term within the hierarchical opposition is the deviant other. For a man to be feminine in his desire is doubly deviant (in the cultural climate in which Schreber existed). However it is possible that Schreber's assertion of femininity *within* himself is actually the most reasonable and efficient solution to the problem of re-asserting the plenitude, unity, priority of masculinity in his system, and thereby partially restabilizing what he remembers as his former full, stable, rational identity.

The idea of this doubling and concern with the 'other' is linked to a mirroring activity. Mirroring or doubling as a motif appears in many Gothic texts, and literary criticism has dealt amply with it elsewhere. In need only be said that it is fundamental to the structure and desired effect of Schreber's text, where he is representing himself as object (and not subject, see for example his discussion 'Concerning Hallucinations', 306). Schreber uses it as a measure of reality³, of the reality of his self and his experience as he understands it. He sees himself layed out in language as an object of his own gaze, and of others' ('*everything that happens is in reference to me*. Writing this sentence, I am fully aware that other people may be tempted to think that I am pathologically conceited...', 262). His *Memoirs* are a mirror, he sees himself therein objectified by science, possessing an integral body ('I consider that the transformations observable on my body may possibly lead to new scientific insights in this field', 205). He sees himself as other, as a woman, as

having a female *Gestalt*, as an object among other objects ('always rest my gaze on female beings, always look at female pictures, etc.,'). As an object among other objects his reflection is at the centre of a 'real' world and a network of relations and connections. This, he finds, opens the door to endless 'speculation'. His writing is reflexive; the scientific, objective truth of his body represents the veracity of the text, and in the text he constructs his reality, and 'proves' the reality of God, 'All that is recorded in my book has led me to the certain knowledge of the existence of a living God. This entitles me to examine the relation between God and His created world from an entirely new point of view in the light of the supernatural impressions I received' (192). The necessity and implications of objective self-presentation and dualistic splitting are intimately linked to the 'paranoid' characteristics of Schreber's narrative.

Narration and Paranoia

Schreber has been called paranoiac. He is *partially* demented; he is able to reason with great intellectual acumen around matter that by somebody 'sane' would be considered mad. This split into a rational self that develops a critical standpoint upon a mad self takes place (his reasoning suggests) in the cause of wholeness, health, *whole-someness*. It is this logical self which is able to accumulate data from the experience of the self subjected to hallucination, and construct from it a rationale on a cosmic scale. Schreber thus aspires to being able to cure on his own terms (though not perhaps those of society) the symptoms of his 'other's' insanity. If a system is so constructed that hallucinatory experience has *meaning* within it, may be explained with logical coherence, then (his reasoning suggests) this experience is no longer irrational but rational.

By standing outside of himself, beside himself, parallel to himself, Schreber is able to build a frame, to develop a relation to reality. That which had threatened him with loss of reason, loss of manhood, loss of identity is now contained within this framework. Daniel Paul Schreber is at the centre of the universe, the focus of God's attention, at the centre of his new system, at the centre of his text, framed. Schreber's split enables him to control the irrational, and to re-define and delimit the self. Schreber frames himself, he *signs* his text, his 'memoirs'. The 'delusional formation' re-establishes a sense of unity; 'the frame is what gives us an object that can have an intrinsic content or structure' (Culler 1983, 195). His body is part of the frame. Mentally he positions himself outside of the body that suffers from persecution or hallucination, and posits these as enigmas yet to be explained by analysis within the con/text of a new system.

Schreber's self-doubling then may be considered an attempt at the reinforcement of unity. It may also be seen as a response to the *paranoid* condition of being subject to the threat of sliding into the other. It is an exercise in differentiation, in finding unity in discreteness. Schreber feared that it was 'God's' intention to transform him into a madman and a 'harlot' (neither possesses an inviolate integrity, both are - in his mind - subject to penetration by external forces). Schreber the paranoid victim of persecution feels he *must* be 'unmanned'. However, a parallel Schreber, the author, the narrator, observer, the analyst finds that he can rearrange the initial significance of such language by constructing an 'integrative principle'¹⁰. The split is not passive, a symptom (of the split-personality kind usually thought of as schizophrenic) but manifests itself as a strategy, a mode of thought and speech. It is active, caught

up in an urgent desire to *mean*, understand, classify and re-stabilize. It is a critical split where an objectified 'self' campaigns for hegemony over another chaotically experiencing self undergoing a loss of sense of identity.

There is intrinsic to the structure of Schreber's text a delirium of interpretation. Reading/writing the text of his own madness he discovers a series of signs which he takes up as roads out of the domain of 'the fantastic' in which he finds himself and integrates them into a more stable conceptual network.

Plot, Speculation and The Integrative Principle

Schreber is confronted with an enigma which, unsolved, threatens the foundations of his very existence,

I lived in the belief - and it is still my conviction that this is the truth - that I had to solve one of the most intricate problems ever set for man and that I had to fight a sacred battle for the greatest good of mankind (146).

Trapped in uncertainty, he nevertheless cannot afford to hesitate. If he cannot resolve the conflict within the ordinary parameters of reality, he must undertake no less than to rewrite that reality. He needs to be able to understand what is happening to his mind and body'', the only alternative is to die in despair, 'I could think of nothing else but that any manner of death, however frightful, was preferable to so degrading an end...' (76). Madness threatens his life and its reverberations are cosmic in scale. He suggests that all created life is involved in a cosmic order and that his illness results from its being damaged ('This 'miraculous structure' has recently suffered a rent, intimately connected with my personal fate'). He needs to be able to explain why, as he believes, 'God,

whose power by rays is essentially constructive in its nature, and creative, came into conflict with Himself when he attempted the irregular policy against me, aimed solely at destroying my bodily integrity and my reason' (63, n.35).

His body, the frame of his self, his identity, his soul has broken through by means of nerves. Soul-murder has been committed upon a living body, he has not become insane. 'Nerves' may be seen as Schreber's rationalization for the breakdown of an opposition basic to his 'madness' - inside/outside. Death in life, what is outside penetrates within, what is inside escapes (into the 'heavens', in an activity known by Schreber as 'tying-to-celestial-bodies', 173). God (and other agents) act upon his nerves from outside of him to produce miracles inside him - visual and verbal hallucinations ('In contra-distinction to these inner voices I hear outer voices...However in both cases my nerves cannot avoid the sound of spoken words; the stimulation of my nerves follows automatically...', 220) and disturbances in his normal bodily functions along with different forms of exquisite physical torture; 'since my nervous illness took the...critical turn, my nerves have been set in motion *from without* incessantly and without respite' (47). By constructing the 'normal' state of things, the Order-of-the-world, around the idea of 'rays' or 'nerves', he is able to posit his illness as the occasion of an abnormal state brought about by the wrong use of nerves. He thus fabricates and preserves intact a conceptual framework which gives his illness meaning.

As he believes, '*everything that happens is in relation to me*', he is 'simply the human being around whom everything turns, to whom everything that happens is related and who therefore, from his own point of view, must also relate all things to himself' (197). Differentiation between

what is self and originates inside, and what is other and belongs outside, has broken down. His relationship to language and meaning is dependent for its efficiency upon this opposition as is his integrity. Re-centring his self, and in particular his body, by the creation and application of an integrative principle is a mode of regaining control over the production of meaning and thereby over his *reason*. His reading and writing the text of his experience in-corporates him. Schreber is *speculating*. He speculates in the sense that he is gambling his survival upon his intellectual capabilities, he risks having found a solution but not the *right* one, not the truth, he risks delusion. He is also speculating in the sense of looking in a mirror. The mirror is his text, the story of creation, his creation, his re-creation, the re-creation of the world - with a totality, a unity, an integrity which is the text's *raison-d'être*.

Schreber feels that he is a victim of 'compulsive thinking' which consists in 'throwing into [his] nerves unconnected conjunctions expressing causal or other relations' and it has forced him 'to ponder many things passed over by human beings' (228), to 'trace the causal relation of every happening, every feeling, and every idea' (229). Schreber's over-active intellectual faculties insist upon his fitting these 'unconnected conjunctions' into an explanatory conceptual framework - in the cause of homeostasis and the fear of dementia. His delusional exegesis is, though deviant in many ways, never far from a relation to widely recognized integrative principles, and he admits that such thought was attractive to him before his illness (230). To Schreber, to ask a question is to set a stone rolling down a hill and to cause an avalanche, 'an extremely simple observation under the pressure of compulsive thinking becomes the starting point of a very considerable mental task' (231). It is in the apparently

unorthodox, unbound and excessive rationalization of the most trivial, outrageous, fantastic or 'supernatural' (hallucinatory) of phenomena that pathology becomes manifest in this text.

The subject of Schreber's text, his 'mad' experience, is treated in the narration in a manner concordant with 'fantastic' fiction in that he indicates that it is of supernatural origin and manipulates it into narrative form. The text as Freud interpreted it involves the exposition of a paranoid '*delusional system*' (1979, 209). Its schematic presentation means that although it was written by somebody certified as insane it is not mere gibberish and is susceptible to interpretation. The organization is part of the insanity, indicating that Schreber suffered from a paradoxically rational kind of madness.

Effectively, however, simultaneously with recording his history, Schreber is transmuting his experience from the fantastic — a condition of complete disorientation — into 'the marvellous'; he has made the decision that 'new laws of nature must be entertained to account for the phenomena' (Todorov 1975, 41). This brand of 'the marvellous' is in accord with what Christine Brook-Rose refers to as 'dogmatic' or 'speculative fabulation' (1981, 81). (She notes that another work which deals with setting out a cosmic vision, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, fits this description). As Schreber reads his experience, however, to complicate Todorov's categorization, it enters the domain of the 'uncanny'. These new laws, operating as they appear to him to do in accordance with reason, mean that through the creation of his own conceptual framework he has found a rational (even, he believes, scientific) explanation for the events he relates. The new laws must be understood to apply to the 'real' world as a revised version of previous knowledge, and not simply as the 'supernatural accepted' in

Todorov's sense. This highlights a problem with Todorov's 'common sense' decision in that it assumes *natural* and *supernatural* to be signs with referents rather than *signifiers* whose *signified* shifts according to the signifying system to which they belong.

Freud may also be considered to have read the text as uncanny (in Todorov's sense), because he himself has a new 'scientific' system of thought that explains the supernatural phenomena described by Schreber; the text is a product of paranoid psychosis². On the other hand, as Freud admits, it may also be productive of paranoid psychotic thought processes in that his own explanatory system may be as delusional as Schreber's, or in other words, he returns us through his explanation not to a state of normality but to an order of the world which is, in its nature as constructed or fictionalized narrative, generically marvellous. Either way, Freud appears to respond to Schreber's narrative as Todorov implies a reader should to a fantastic or ultimately gothic text³.

Schreber attempts, through the elaboration of a cosmic system, to encode a reading of his text as both 'marvellous' and 'uncanny'. Todorov's 'genres' collapse into each other with Schreber's rampant reorganization of the lineaments of reality. His psychosis is manifest partly in a perpetual effort to inscribe closure and meaning into text and experience, driven by the fear of an annihilation of self in insanity. Schreber's treatment of his madness is most fundamentally storytelling. He is compulsively elaborating a tremendous plot, subduing everything he perceives to narrative form, to cause and effect, to the story of Schreber, God, and the fate of creation.

PLOTTING DAMNATION: JAMES HOGG'S *PRIVATE MEMOIRS AND CONFESSIONS OF A
JUSTIFIED SINNER*

Narrative Structure: The Double Account

This is a work which has been called a 'masterpeice' of nineteenth century Gothic (Wilt, 1980). Punter observes that the primary object of the work is to investigate the 'extremes of terror', as he draws attention to Hogg's concern with setting up an experimental structure which is peculiarly effective - 'the audience is led, gradually, and sometimes hesitantly, into new territories where terror can have full rein, independent of the constraints of the real world' (1980, 133-4). In other words, the work is not remarkable simply for the events it describes but for the narrative technique employed in achieving its disturbing effects. It has been selected for analysis because the 'memoirs' of the 'justified sinner' prove to be an account of experience identifiable as psychotic, and because the mode of narration sustains, on several different levels, comparison with Schreber's. Punter has recommended that perhaps this work should be termed a *paranoiac text*, since it is very difficult to know 'where the reader is situated in an encounter with a story of persecution told by the persecuted', and this forces us to react 'ambivalently' (1980, 158). This section investigates the implications of such a suggestion, holding within view Schreber's strategies in the *Memoirs*.

These 'private memoirs' do not constitute the text in its totality. The narrative of Robert Wringhim (the 'justified sinner') is central to the text, but is framed by an objective account of the events in which he

appears to be involved ('The Editor's Narrative'). Wringhim's narrative is preceded by a relation of what is known popularly about the course of Wringhim's life. Wringhim's mother (Lady Dalcastle) is a strict Calvinist and his (official) father a dissipated lord. His spiritual father (who, it is implied - and suspected by the Lord Dalcastle - may be his biological father) is also a strict Calvinist minister and Robert takes his name from him, following his mother's abandonment of the lord, and 'spiritual' union with the minister. Robert has a brother, George, who is staunch, upright, legitimate and aristocratic. Robert takes to dogging his brother's every footstep and publicly embarrassing him. On attempting to avoid further persecution by his brother, George sets out for 'Arthur's Seat', a 'rocky precipice' (Hogg 1969, 41). He is here confronted with what appears to be an oversized, demonic apparition of his brother's face, and then by his brother himself, and is 'confounded between the shadow and the substance' (48). Both accuse each other of being in league with the Devil, and fight. George spares Wringhim but is later found murdered in mysterious circumstances. Two women (the lord's mistress and a prostitute) then decide to look for the culprit where the law has failed to bring him to justice, suspecting Wringhim. The mystery is not cleared up however and it appears that more is happening than meets the eye, or more than the eye may comprehend. In the course of their attempt to uncover Wringhim's guilt they see him with a mysterious companion, who on the first occasion appears to be his dead brother George, and later somebody else whom Wringhim names Gil Martin - and who mysteriously vanishes from the scene as Wringhim attacks the two women who have had him under there surveillance. Lord Dalcastle has died following the news of the death of his son, and his property falls to Lady Dalcastle, who herself then

disappears. Just as it seems Wringhim is about to be caught he too disappears.

Wringhim's own narrative gives special emphasis to what he presents as moments of spiritual significance in his life. He relates the mental anguish he suffered before he had the assurance from his Calvinist 'father' that he was one of 'the elect', his elation afterward, and his encounter with a strange person - who seems to be spiritually and physically the mirror image of himself. His friend takes on an ambiguously satanic quality. It is not clear whether this person is real but oddly perceived by Wringhim, or supernaturally 'real', or only psychologically real - an hallucination. He persuades Wringhim that nothing can alter the fact that he (Wringhim) is elect and that he must commit horrible crimes in the name of God. This being names himself Gil-Martin, and incites Wringhim to murder his brother. Wringhim gives an account of the murder, which he then admits to be that of Gil-Martin, because he could not trust his own memory of the event. Wringhim comes to believe he has a double who takes over his life and body. He is later accused of having murdered his mother, but has no memory of having done so. He takes to wandering, still haunted by Gil-Martin. Having attempted to have his memoir printed in order to enlighten humanity, gain 'religious' fame and revolutionize doctrine, Wringhim ends his narrative and apparently his life in a scene of intense psychological anguish and terrible phantasmagoria.

His guilt has not been publicly established, and it is, in any case possible to feel, as David Punter says, that he has not been to blame for his 'misfortunes' (though what these consist in must remain uncertain) since Hogg has 'taken pains to demonstrate that he is, in any reasonable definition of the term, insane' (Punter 1980, 156). However, it is,

perhaps, not quite this straightforward.

Following the conclusion of Wringhim's memoirs, the reader is returned to 'The Editor's Narrative', which recounts the discovery of the manuscript of the memoirs when the grave is found and the body exhumed. This text exhibits a radically conceived version of the mechanism observed in Schreber's *Memoirs*. Schreber's narrative openly acknowledges its public purpose (his ambition to communicate his experience to people for the purpose of scientific or religious enlightenment). His problems lay in how to present to the public experience of an incredible, irrational subjective nature in a persuasive manner. These problems are 'solved', in a more or less subtle fashion, by the narrator's substitution of a private for a public language (he attempts to render such experience accessible by using religious discourse). Wringhim's 'memoirs' on the other hand are presented as intensely 'private' ('there being a curse pronounced by the writer on him that should dare to alter or amend', 253). Perhaps the religious nature of its contents, untempered by an appeal to science, determine that they should be so. Wringhim's personal narrative is offered in terms of the history of his soul (when taking his manuscript to the press he suggests that it is a kind of *Pilgrim's Progress*). As is the case with Schreber, the plot seems to centre on a 'mission'; in Wringhim's view, the steps toward his salvation and the activity demanded of him once he is saved. A large portion of the text as a whole, however, does not however belong to the 'memoirs' but forms a public commentary upon them, or is designed to mediate their public reception. The expectation is encouraged that the first narration will constitute a detailed and coherent account that will substantiate or refute the claims of Wringhim's narration 'as written by himself' (title page of Wringhim's narrative).

The Editor presents himself as carrying out the task of repeating, reporting or 'recording' (1) an extraordinary history already known to a few people and to be made public by his efforts. The Editor is not representing the material as fiction but as fact. It is partly the product of public consensus, of 'history, justiciary records, and tradition' (92). On the other hand the documentary authority of the editor's narrative is not complete. The difficulties that Schreber noted of relating material that is likely to meet with an incredulous and condemnatory reception are present here as the editor comments that it has become the stuff of legend and folktale, and makes no great claims for it containing more truth than rumour ('to tradition I must appeal for the remainder of the motley adventures of the house', 1).

In this text it is possible to see the objective/subjective strategic manoeuvres of Schreber's *Memoirs* crystallized out into two entirely separate accounts. Neither purports to be 'scientific' in nature, though the Editor assumes some of the authority of the historian. The split 'I' noted in Schreber's narrative (the 'I' that undergoes psychotic experience and the 'I' that takes on its objective, retrospective representation) here becomes two different narrators. Hogg's Editor says that he presumes to 'offer no remarks', no commentary upon Wringhim's narration beyond calling it a 'document of a most singular nature' (93). He is merely providing an account of the events as they happened, and rendering it dramatic by the inclusion of large sections of dialogue *as he has heard it reported*. The Editor's narrative persona does however provide some kind of *discours*, a public discourse, in the language that he uses. Though not without an undercutting humour, he is very much aware of tradition, custom, social and literary etiquette ('Sorry am I, that the shackles of modern decorum

restrain me from penning this famous rebuke...', 15) and the 'gentleman's' code of behaviour. Wringhim's madness, or stories of satanic possession, are not easily freed from the 'shackles of modern decorum' (sixty years after the publication of this book Schreber was encountering problems with getting material in his memoirs published that was not considered 'aesthetic'). The critical distinction here springs first from questions of legitimacy and illegitimacy rather than the distinction between the scientific and the fictional or poetic, or the sane and the insane. The issue of madness is here obscured by concerns of illegitimacy, with being outside of, and subversive of, the law. The Editor demonstrates a concern similar to Schreber's that the reader should 'judge for himself' of the status and authenticity of the 'memoirs' (93). He speaks from within an articulate, educated register fully conversant with, and observant of 'the limitations imposed on man by society'. He is himself a 'legitimate' author; he subscribes to that realm of meaning structured by legal, political and class concerns. As might be expected his narrative focusses largely upon the unorthodox marriage between Lord and Lady Dalcastle, upon George, their 'legitimate' son and brother to the subject of the 'memoirs', and questions of property, inheritance, and criminal motivation. Robert Wringhim's narrative from the beginning emphasises that he was 'born an outcast in the world' (98). This nameless, unspecified Editor establishes a 'commonsense' perspective on a text that he determines to be the work of a religious 'fanatic' rather than a madman.

However, on the completion of Wringhim's memoir, the Editor questions the nature of the preceding narrative, and introduces a new sequence of events which he regards as yet more incredible:

What can this work be? Sure, you will say, it must be an allegory; or (as the writer calls it) a religious parable, showing the dreadful

danger of self-righteousness? I cannot tell. Attend to the sequel: which is a thing so extraordinary, so unprecedented, and so far out of the common course of human events, that if there were not hundreds of living witnesses to attest the truth of it, I would not bid any rational being believe it (240).

His expression of doubt and scepticism about the previous narration establishes him as a reliable witness to something even more extraordinary — which, however, like Wringhim's experiences, may or may not have taken place. In this sequel the Editor refers to a story in the *Blackwood's Magazine* of August, 1823 — written by James Hogg. The author uses his own name, a journal, a date to pin down his tale to coordinates of reality. However, the Editor questions the authenticity of 'Hogg's' account of the circumstances of Wringhim's death (gathered orally from local people who report somebody having been seen with Wringhim before he was found hanged) and of the discovery of his body a century later in an undecayed state. The Editor then sets out to prove its truth. Hogg's 'Hogg' may be seen, in sense, a ploy to 'defamiliarize' the fictional illusion, drawing attention 'illegitimately' to the reader's suspension of disbelief. On another level, though this 'Hogg' figure is related to neither the Editor or Wringhim in any way except as the discoverer of Wringhim's grave, the author is by sleight of hand supposedly real enough, as is *Blackwood's Magazine* (though the Editor refers to the magazine which contained the letter as being untrustworthy); this simultaneously endows the story with a new reality status. Having been to visit the grave himself the Editor then establishes 'Hogg's' authenticity, but in doing so he has placed the frame of the whole text (that agreement by which it is divided from 'reality') under tension; it has been damaged. Instead of merely provoking uncertainty as to which version of events is the right one, Hogg assaults the implied reader's ability psychologically to engage with the work in the

customary manner. The text confronts us with two distinct versions of the 'actual' writer; one whose historical reality we accept, and one whose fictional status we accept. Yet they cannot exist simultaneously, one counteracts the other. Neither is connected to the Editor, and it is the Editor who relates the events which lead up to the discovery of the text that has just been read. Objectification is again employed on a concrete textual level to re-endow the story with a three-dimensional reality. The text unearthed by the Editor is Wringhim's and this is 'proven' because the title page of Robert's account *as it appears in the novel* is reprinted, reinscribed within the Editor's narrative.

The Editor also confronts us with two distinct versions of the central protagonist, and sets up a deluded/rational opposition which is nevertheless inadequate to a categorization of Wringhim's text. His concluding narrative ends with the comment that though the story does not appear to be 'consistent with reason' it could be considered 'authentic'; if, that is, the rational approach were taken that accepts Wringhim's narrative to be correspondent with 'traditional facts' (254). Hogg appeals to the establishment of a consensus, and represents Wringhim (despite his irrationality) as a trustworthy witness to the events related in his account. On the other hand, Wringhim's subjective narrative, as it stands, may be the creation of a 'deluded creature' at the 'height of madness'. The 'reasonable' Editor desires not to be too closely associated with him; 'I confess that I do not comprehend the writer's drift. It is certainly impossible that these scenes could ever have occurred, that he describes as having himself transacted' (254). The Editor's ordering principle in reading Wringhim's text has proved inadequate, things do not correlate, he cannot master it in a rational manner.

Narrative Technique: The Double Narrative and Cognitive Uncertainty

The ordering principle operating behind Wringhim's narrative is dualistic and symbolic. Wringhim refers everything back to a black and white spiritual condition relative to salvation or damnation. The narrative eventually brings about the hierarchical inversion of this opposition. By the conclusion of the book the man who *believes* implicitly in the literalness of the Word has (if one is saved by absolute decree, one can never be 'unsaved'), precisely through the completeness of this belief, apparently been irrevocably damned. Those who are represented by him as profligate, ignorant or licentious then necessarily assume the status of the 'saved'. The text also renders the sense behind the Editor's irrational/rational opposition dependent upon the status of the supernatural, which remains ambiguous.

Events prove to be equally focussed upon the idea of inversion or subversion of oppositions usually held in place by 'legitimacy' (social order, supplemented by the law of God). Hogg's Editor first reports an oppositional relationship between a pious woman and a profligate lord (Robert Wringhim's parents). The relationship gives rise to a series of deviant incidents and situations. The wife lives alone, mainly in the company however of her 'spiritual guide' - the Reverend Mr. Wringhim. Both suffer from a severe condition of Calvinist *hubris* ('How delightful to think that a justified person can do no wrong! Who would not envy the liberty where-with we are made free?', 13). The lord meanwhile takes a mistress into his house and lives openly with her. One son is born to the wife and acknowledged as lawful, another is born to her in far more dubious circumstances. Eventually the lawful son dies in a mysterious manner, and the other inherits the lord's estate, becomes legitimate,

though he is suspected of murder (a crime in both religious and social terms).

The reinstatement of order and meaning in both narratives depends upon the solving of a series of enigmas. Each narration sets up a process of 'compulsive thinking', a kind of 'detective' approach to the problems of whether Robert's narrative is mad, whether Gil-Martin is the devil, whether Robert is a murderer, whether Robert is saved (from Robert's point of view), whether Robert is Robert. The mystery surrounding George Dalcastle's death is the focus of the second half of the Editor's narration (until still more suspected murders are added). The Editor posits God as the foremost key to the resolution of any enigma, any crime, any subversion of the *natural* order of things - He is the ultimate agent of the law;

It is the controller of Nature alone, that can bring light out of the darkness, and order out of confusion. Who is he that causeth the mole, from his secret path of darkness, to throw up the gem, the gold, and the precious ore? The same, that from the mouths of babes and sucklings can extract the perfection of praise, and who can make the most abject of his creatures instrumental in bringing the most hidden truths to light (56).

The late lord's mistress, Arabella Logan, becomes the instrument whereby - it is expected - the murderer of the inheritor of the old lord's estate will be brought to light. She feels that upon receiving the news of the death of his legitimate son, Lord Dalcastle has suspected the foulest play,

She perceived that some strange conviction, too horrible for expression, preyed on his mind from the moment that the fatal news reached him, to the last of his existence; and in his last ravings, he uttered some incoherent words about justification by faith alone, and absolute and eternal predestination having been the ruin of his house (56).

Miss Logan decides, 'I will spend my days, and my little patrimony, in endeavours to rake up and expose the unnatural deed' (57). She takes upon

herself the unravelling of the mystery of George's death. All is 'wrapped in darkness' but 'by dint of a thousand sly and secret inquiries' Arabella puts together a hypothesis concerning Lady Dalcastle, the deceased's mother; 'she had hopes of having discovered a clue, which, if she could keep hold of the thread, would lead her through darkness to the light of truth' (57). Through association with another woman she is able to reconstruct (as the Editor has done with the whole of the strange story) the events of the night of the murder. Where 'the law' has proved useless, Miss Logan expects to solve the mystery. She develops a theory that does appear to produce significant connections for the facts involved in the case so far; "'the murderer of the accomplished George Colwan has been his own brother, set on, there is little doubt, by her who bare them both, and her directing angel, the self-justified bigot. Aye, and yonder they sit, enjoying the luxuries so dearly purchased, with perfect impunity!'" (78). However all her efforts at deduction, all her surmises are shattered. The man who was killed, for whose murder she is seeking retribution, seems to be alive again. She, and Bell Calvert the prostitute, see him walking down a street with Robert Wringhim.

At this point any ambiguity surrounding the physical reality of Gil-Martin becomes ill-founded, for Robert talks about walking with Gil-Martin in his own narrative, and there is the possibility that the two women *mistook* him for George. The women are not represented as entirely reliable witnesses by the Editor; they are emotionally and imaginatively extremely reactive (Mrs. Logan 'uttered a loud cry between a groan and a shriek, and fell down on the floor', 'she had scarcely ever well recovered out of one fit before she fell into another...', 81-2). As objective witnesses, two women (who are operating outside of the law, and are

unlawful — mistress and prostitute) may be supposed to be considered unreliable (and associated with the rumour and folktale dimension of the tale mentioned by the Editor). On the other hand, Gil-Martin's supernatural quality is substantiated. The devil is traditionally thought to assume different forms, and Robert has related how Gil-Martin admits to this ability. The 'detective' nature of the narrative shifts — with the women's version — from a social, realist, legal basis to the a more epistemologically uncertain ground: What is naturally lawful? What mistaken perception? What hallucination? The two women are left once more in confusion; 'their conversation was wholly about the dead, who seemed to be alive, and their minds were wandering and groping in a chaos of mystery' (84).

The Editor's introduction to Wringhim's narrative, then, offers not only one unsolved mystery where it has promised resolution, but two; who committed the murder and who/what is young Wringhim's friend who looks so *uncannily* like the murdered man? ('my thoughts are less about him than the extraordinary being who accompanies him' Arabella says of the suspected murderer, 90). If what they have seen is unnatural then that must be consequent upon the original nature of the crime; in the case of certain crimes God takes a perverse attitude to discovery and retribution; "If there is an earthly crime", said Mrs. Calvert, "for the due punishment of which the Almighty may be supposed to subvert the order of nature, it is fratricide" (90).

The objective narration, in the voice of Miss Logan, questions the criteria presumably held in common between the 'realist' editor and the

reader he addresses. Insufficient empirical evidence and explanation is abandoned in favour of an implied understanding of the mysterious ways of God in achieving victory over evil. Instead of representing reason, the Logos, stability, God himself brings into the text the unnatural (and 'legitimizes' the reality of the supernatural). When her habitual cognitive methodology breaks down she shifts to a mythological and hypothetical conceptual framework within which her intuitions can operate. She abandons the rational, deductive, process. If, she reasons, we subjectively, empirically perceive something of an unnatural or irrational character it is nevertheless so; "we have nothing but our senses to depend upon, and you and I believe that we see a person, why, we do see him. Whose word or whose reasoning can convince us against our own senses" (85). Here she begins to sound like Schreber claiming reality status for his hallucinations. By her affirmation Miss Logan nevertheless institutes Cartesian doubt. The appearance of the supernatural means that God is no longer benevolently rational but is suspected of subverting his own order. The normal process of reasoning through accumulation of fact and hypothetical connection is perverted;

I shall suppose, therefore, that there is, not a true God, who is the sovereign source of all truth, but some evil demon, no less cunning and deceiving than powerful, who has used all his artifice to deceive me. I will suppose that the heavens, the air, the earth, colours, shapes, sounds and all external things that we see, are only illusions and deceptions which he uses to take me in (Descartes 1968, 100).

This demon might be Gil-Martin. He is the third factor which throws the enigma/solution process into confusion. The investigative activity is turned back upon itself, a new process is initiated whereby the elements and principles for the elaboration of the detective riddle must first be solved. The murderer's own account follows, and the condition for the

solution to the original mystery becomes the problem of *discovering the laws* of its solution. The text is apparently abnegating its responsibilities to the reader whose activity has been invoked by presence of the 'Editor'.

The pattern of connections with which we have so far been provided by the Editor for the formation of the correct hypothesis are of a dubious nature, and not sufficient support for the encounter with a tale told by a potential 'fanatic', or hallucinating madman. Neither is it helpful for the inquiry to discover Miss Logan's valorization of the subjective over the rational and objective. For a solution, and retribution, to be achieved satisfactorily there must be a consensus. Retribution according to the law is not a private but a social event, dependent upon consensus and objectivity, but the possibility and security of these has been undermined. Clive Bloom has said of 'detective' writing that

the tale is not the tale of the teller but of the reader (reading itself abolished by becoming a form of 'listening' to a narrator guide). Detective writing in the nineteenth century is therefore a continuing tale of what it means to be read: a constant search for meaning among a jumble of signs and signals patterned as if random yet always concentric, a concentricism guided by and organised within the mind of the detective (the eccentric outsider) upon whom the responsibility or organisation and revelation rests (1986, 81).

The mind of the detective works in symbiosis with the mind of 'the reader'. Bloom goes on to say that once the crime has been solved the original orderliness of the world is restored, 'society is rendered safe only when the detective also is rendered impotent, his analytic rage spent, (for the detective is obsessive and professionally paranoid)' (ibid., 89). In the case of Hogg's *Sinner*, however, the opposite occurs. The Editor's narrative solves nothing and adds a further 'crime' (against natural, as well as legal law). 'Society' is not safe, the detective 'rage' is doubled.

Wringhim's Paranoid Logic

Wringhim's narrative, the core of the text, might be expected to provide the means of allaying this rage, but the terms have been altered. Where Mrs. Logan's account has damaged any objective perspective upon events, Wringhim's subjective narrative is invested with a new legitimacy. From the common-sense angle it has been suggested that God has taken the subversion of his laws into his own hands. Wringhim then launches into an account of his obsessive hypothesizing about the problem of the operation of God's laws. Boundaries between Wringhim's fanaticism or delusion, and normality seem to be breaking down. He needs to believe in a universal plot, a comprehensive system to which all the 'individual processes of life' (as Schreber says) must be referred, and he finds this in Calvinist belief. Christianity offers an archetypal detective story that provides a framework for Robert's experience: as 'the Editor has already said, God is the agent by which all crimes will be brought to light. The criminal here is man, he must receive retribution for his sins, must atone for them, in the name of divine order. At the end of his account Robert describes how he was 'hung by the locks over a yawning chasm, to which I could perceive no bottom' (239). Psychologically, perhaps, the state of being elect, as in the case of Schreber becoming the object of God's attentions ('I became in a way for God the only human being', Schreber 1988, 262; but God's newest plan involves destroying his reason) is actually something like this. The condition of knowing one exists in a (particularly Calvinist) Christian universe demands suspension above eternal damnation. Life is given meaning by obsession with death, salvation by damnation, God by the devil.

Calvinism represents an enigma to Wringhim. *Either* every action is a sin, *or it is mapped out* and preordained by God in his eternal plan. His

story from then on may be interpreted as a search for the solution to this problem. Beyond the questions of who committed murder, whether delusion, God or the supernatural is at the heart of the crime, further fuel for the analytic 'rage' is being added to the text: it is a philosophical problem that Descartes engaged with: What is the normal order of the operation of God's laws? What is the relation of the individual to the rest of creation? Is the individual God-like? To be elect is to assume a central role in His plot, to find meaning and stability in existence. An outcast of social meaning structures, Robert searches for identity in an abstract system of a paranoid nature. Robert's reading and writing of his experience in terms of Calvinist doctrine is all-embracing and begins - he believes - before his birth. His identity depends upon it. Before his election he is a void, a hole, a chaos, a non-being, an entity marginalized from existence. He is not born until he is saved and named in the 'book of life' (115). His birth depends upon his entering and becoming central to a system that generates its own significance;

I come now to the most important period of my existence,- the period that has modelled my character, and influenced every action of my life,- without which, this detail of my actions would have been as a tale that hath been told - a monotonous *farrago* - an uninteresting harangue-in short, a thing of nothing. Whereas, lo! it must now be a relation of great and terrible actions, done in the might, and by the commission of heaven. Amen (114).

He reconstructs a world and an identity along Schreberesque lines. He places himself at the centre of a cosmic plot. Wringhim needs to believe that he is 'saved', one of God's elect, perfect and complete, that nothing he can ever do will threaten this completeness. At first he knows himself to be a sinner, an outcast from God's elect - liable to end a nothing, unnamed, in hell; 'I lived in a hopeless and deplorable state of mind; for I said to myself, "if my name is not written in the book of life from all

eternity, it is vain for me to presume that either vows or prayers of mine, or those of all mankind combined, can ever procure its insertion now" (100). Robert is 'utterly confounded at the multitude of [his] transgressions' and informs us 'I was sensible that there were great numbers of sins of which I had never been able to repent, and these momentary ones, by a moderate calculation, had, I saw, long ago, amounted to a hundred and fifty thousand in the minute' (107)².

The narrative of Robert Wringhim, the 'justified sinner' is the history of a subjectivity which cannot be convinced of its wholeness until it has produced an 'other'³. As an 'illegitimate' person (unacknowledged by his father) Wringhim discovers in the Calvinist notion of election a legitimacy that transcends that of his socially legitimate brother George. He becomes obsessed with antagonism toward George as his profligate, dissolute, 'unsaved' counterpart. Where George excels socially Robert behaves in the most anti-social manner imaginable to him. He attempts to provoke George into the 'wicked' behaviour of attacking his own brother, an account of which is provided by the Editor's narrative ('he seemed courting persecution', 24) and thus establishing publicly and privately his own righteousness and authenticity. In Wringhim's narrative, however, a second double plays a larger role, Gil-Martin.

Gil-Martin at first poses an enigma to Robert, being nameless, homeless, and obscurely powerful. When Robert is told by his Calvinist surrogate father that he has finally entered the number of God's elect he is triumphant, 'I wept for joy to be thus assured of my freedom from all sin, and of the impossibility of my ever falling away from my new state...my whole frame seemed to be renewed' (115-6). All his sins he counts as 'blotted out' now that he is an 'accepted person' (108). At this

point he encounters what has the appearance of his own imago, an entity that is to exist side by side with him, and partakes of his own identity; 'What was my astonishment on perceiving that he was the same being as myself' (116). Robert develops a problematic relation to his external appearance that suggests that Gil-Martin could be a delusional double, a subjective delusion. When Gil-Martin first appears Robert reports that those people who see him (Robert) claim no longer to recognize him. He appears transformed, no longer recognizable, 'my mother and reverend father kept insisting that I was an altered youth, changed in my appearance, my manners, and my whole conduct' (127). Later Robert displays a radical fear and alienation from his own mirror image. At the height of his persecution by demonic phenomena he fears to see there the reflection of the schism that he senses within himself.

I not only looked around me with terror at every one that approached, but I was become a terror to myself; or rather, my body and soul were terrors to each other; and, had it been possible, I felt as if they would have gone to war. I dared not look at my face in a glass, for I shuddered at my own image and likeness (227).

However, interpretative doubt is again introduced when George, Robert's legitimate brother, is found petrified between Robert and his dreadful mirror image. He sees the apparition in a mist, 'the face was the face of his brother, but dilated to twenty times the natural size...' (41). On turning to encounter his brother in the flesh, George confuses the imago with the reality, 'being confounded between the shadow and the substance, he new not what he was doing or what he had done' (42). Robert reports that on their first acquaintance Gil-Martin informs him;

You think I am your brother...or that I am your second self. I am indeed your brother, not according to the flesh, but in my belief of the same truths, and my assurance in the same mode of redemption, than which, I hold nothing so great or so glorious on earth (117).

Anxiety is created in Robert and the reader as to the nature of this apparition. Though at first it looks as if it were the reflection of Robert's wholeness and perfection, it is actually *amorphous*. Robert is told that the stranger can assume the likeness of anybody he thinks about (125). He prefers to remain nameless, but as Robert cannot converse with a nameless person he calls *himself* Gil-Martin (129). Robert produces the hypothesis that he is the Czar Peter of Russia, 'having heard that he had been travelling through Europe in disguise'. From the moment of this revelation Gil-Martin's existence is totally coherent with Robert's megalomaniacal and besieged world view. Gil-Martin as a national ruler takes on the characteristics of a crusader, justifying murder in the fight against the forces of evil. Robert has 'thence-forward great and mighty hopes of high preferment, as a defender and avenger of the oppressed Christian Church, under the influence of this great potentate' (130). His conviction of this fiction grows until it forms the parameters of his understanding of his life, 'I had now no doubt that he was Peter of Russia. Every thing combined to warrant the supposition, and, of course, I had resolved to act in conformity with the discovery I had made' (133).

Robert spends all his time in the company of this being discussing Calvinist doctrine. Then he becomes ill,

I generally conceived myself as two people...this occasioned a confusion in all my words and ideas that utterly astounded my friends, who all declared, that instead of being deranged in my intellect, they had never heard my conversation manifest so much energy or sublimity of conception; but for all that, over the singular delusion that I was two persons, my reasoning faculties had no power (154).

He falls increasingly under the influence of the mysterious and sinister Gil-Martin. Urging doctrine to its wildest extremes Gil-Martin convinces Robert that it is his duty to murder in the name of God, and Robert then

murders his brother. Eventually Robert believes that his body is periodically usurped by his strange partner for the purpose of committing atrocities. His companion turns into a persecutory phenomenon. Gil-Martin informs him;

Sooner shall you make the mother abandon the child of her bosom; nay, sooner cause the shadow to relinquish the substance, than separate me from your side. Our beings are amalgamated, as it were, and consociated in one (189).

Robert feels himself to be completely overpowered by a being whose objective existence is doubtful.

I can in no-wise describe the effect this appalling speech had on me. It was like the announcement of death to one who had of late deemed himself free, if not of something worse than death, and of longer continuance. There was I doomed to remain in misery, subjugated, soul and body, to one whose presence was become more intolerable to me than ought on earth could compensate' (189).

Eventually Robert is hounded to suicide by his other. Robert's desire for completeness, for absolute certainty has been expressed in the form and discourse of his demonic counterpart. At first Gil-Martin appears to be an ideal member of the inviolable elect, the purveyor of perfect doctrine. He answers all questions, in the style of Schreber's paranoid logical voice. He provides an account of the elect Robert and all that he believes in, giving him a sense of solidity and truth. He then proceeds to test this language to its limits. With the supposed intention of teaching and convincing Robert of its rock-like (Czar 'Peter') veracity, he empties it of meaning.

Avoidance of the question that never ceases to unravel would have preserved Robert in a state of complacent ignorance. Gil-Martin practices a form of meticulous inversion. Whilst affirming Robert's identity to be of superior significance he is also suggesting that he may as well be non-existent. Robert is replaced in the same position of ineffectuality as he

had been when he had despairingly watched his sins multiply before his eyes. The only way to convince himself of being in control of his existence had been to be, actively, a sinner. Gil-Martin 'deconstructs' the semantic network that sustains his new state as a 'justified' sinner and reveals to him his state of non-being, of existential damnation;

Now, when you know, as you do, (and as every one of the elect may know of himself) that this Saviour died for you, namely and particularly, dare you say that there is not enough of merit in his great atonement to annihilate all your sins, let them be as heinous and atrocious as they may? And, moreover, do you not acknowledge that God hath preordained and decreed whatsoever comes to pass? Then, how is it you should deem it in your power to eschew one action of your life, whether good or evil? (126).

Robert's double becomes persecutory, undermining the system within which Robert has interpreted his experience and seen himself created as subject. Whereas Schreber's paranoid activity involved the splitting into an analytical self which ordered the delusions of the other into a logical 'reality', Robert's obsessional self relates to an other which analyses his faith into psychopathy, who 'overthrows all religion and revelation together; ...jumbles them into a chaos, out of which human capacity can never select what is good' (132). Though posing as his saviour it is clear to Robert that Gil-Martin is inflicting punishment upon him, for his state of confusion and indecision with regard to complete submission to Gil-Martin himself. It is never clear, the further Robert sinks into this infernal, nightmarish world, how much is fanatical delusion and how much to be taken as 'objective truth'.

It is possible to compare the persecution of Robert with that of Schreber. David Punter proposes that, 'Wringhim is clearly progressively subject to a religious mania with close affinities to recognizable forms of schizophrenia' (1980, 153). (Presumably Wringhim is not identified as

paranoiac here since paranoia is often clinically viewed as a form of schizophrenia, itself used more or less interchangeably with 'insanity' generally.) Internal destruction effected from outside seems to signal a complete loss of control within the subjective self. Self-destruction, and death at the hands of his double, blur into the same thing, and it is not certain whether the impulse originates from inside or outside. Gil-Martin says to Wringhim,

I have attached myself to your wayward fortune...and it has been my ruin as well as thine. Ungrateful as you are I cannot give you up to be devoured; but this is a life that it is impossible to brook longer. Since our hopes are blasted in this world, and all our schemes of grandeur overthrown; and since our everlasting destiny is settled by decree which no act of ours can invalidate, let us fall by our own hands, or by the hands of each other; die like heroes..throwing off this frame of dross (234).

'God's' persecution of Schreber also involves the endangering of his own existence ('What is to become of God - if I may so express myself - should I die. I am certain that the whole relation into which God brought Himself to our earth and to other human beings rests at present upon the particular relationship that exists between Him and me', Schreber 1988, 291). Robert's tortured 'frame' coincides with the collapse of his Calvinist belief that he is elect, the former architectonics supporting his identity. There is a moment of struggle when (as happens in the case of Hyde over the body of Jekyll to be discussed later) his double strives for the attainment of power over his self;

I have been buffeted as never living creature was. My vitals have all been torn, and every faculty and feeling of my soul racked, and tormented into callous insensibility. I was even hung by the locks over a yawning chasm...(239)

In this state of torture Robert repeats a prayer told to him by the demonic Gil-Martin and is 'instantly at liberty' (239). Thus he is no longer suspended but damned; that is if we are to believe Gil-Martin to be

the Devil, or the devilish other of this paranoiac's God. It is interesting to compare this language to Schreber's;

I may say that hardly a single limb or organ in my body escaped being temporarily damaged by miracles, nor a single muscle being pulled by miracles, either moving or paralysing it according to the respective purpose... (Schreber 1988, 148).

Curiously this splitting and persecution, and what looks like disintegration, keels over into a renewal of of a perverse kind of order and unity.

I am wedded to you so closely, that I feel as if I were the same person. Our essences are one, our bodies and spirits being united, so, that I am drawn towards you as by magnetism, and wherever you are, there must my presence be with you (Hogg 1969, 229).

Instead of being eternally elect Robert recognizes himself to be *irrevocably* damned. He becomes 'solemnly pledged' to Gil-Martin. His 'faith' in his paranoid delusional system remains intact, but Robert has assumed another subject position within it. Schreber also recognizes that out of the persecution and suffering will come a new status for his identity, he assumes a different position in relation to God and God regains something of his traditional detachment and superiority;

There must be an equalizing justice and it can never be that a morally unblemished human being with feet firmly planted in the Order of the World should have to perish...the reward of my victory could only be something very extraordinary for my loyal perseverance in the struggle for my reason and for the purification of God.. (Schreber 1988, 292-294).

Schreber is more fortunate than Robert in his relationship to a supernatural double; however, each delusional *integrative* principle is preserved through this rationalization of the experience of internal disintegration.

Plotting Damnation: The Text

Wringhim's narrative in Hogg's *Confessions* concludes with the approach of the Devil (presumably, in the form of Gil-Martin, 'his stern face blackened with horrid despair', 240) and with Robert's intended suicide. In Robert's own mind there is no mystery and no doubt left. The text does not, however, end here. The Editor first appears again with a display of scepticism. Further mystery is indicated and further attempts made to solve it. Robert's suicide has become legendary locally for the particularly difficult manner in which it was carried out, 'every one said, that if the devil had not assisted him it was impossible the thing could have been done' (242). The grave of the suicide is then repeatedly broken into as a result of curiosity. More witnesses are accumulated. The Editor is the last to see the body before it disintegrates on contact with the air. Beyond Robert's testimony, the veracity of the story has yet to be proved with evidence of his 'natural' death in order to bring about closure.

The clue is supposed to lie in his grave as to whether he really was the victim of supernatural persecution or a madman. The opening of the grave discloses two new enigmas. Over a century later Robert's body has not disintegrated, 'this man's corpse has been miraculously preserved frae decay, a hundred times langer (sic) than any other body's' (252). Finally it is Robert's narrative that becomes the greatest mystery into which we must search for the truth, 'But now I could wager a guinea, it has been for the preservation o'that little book. And Lord kens what may be in't! It will maybe reveal some mystery that mankind disna ken naething about yet' (253). The cycle of disruption of the normal, designation of mystery and spiraling interpretation begins all over again.

Robert's version did not come to light until the opening of his grave and the discovery of his manuscript because when he took his memoirs to the printer for publication the text was destroyed. It was destroyed, Robert says, because the Devil was seen in the printing house ("Surely you are not such a fool", said I, 'as to believe that the devil really was in the printing office?', Robert is told, 223). Robert deduces who it 'really' was, and that Gil-Martin 'had visited the printing house in order to furthur the progress of my work'. That work is now an object in his reader's hands. Whether it is the Editor, or actually a *malignant demon* that has enabled it to be there is a mystery. In order not to succumb to the madness of the latter belief the text must be reread to prove that Robert is mad. The 'analytic rage' is perpetuated.

The Editor, as reader of Robert's text, proposes the theory that the writer 'wrote and wrote about a deluded creature, till he arrived at that height of madness, that he believed himself the very object whom he had been all along describing' (254). The text exploits the basic criteria for discriminating truth from delusion (objectivity/subjectivity), and is structured in a way that determines the reader will read and read about a deluded creature until all possibility of objectivity is undermined. I would suggest that the text is, in fact, so designed as to make it difficult for its reader not to become 'the very object' whom he or she has 'all along been reading about'. Bloom has said that the 'responsibility of organization and revelation' rests in the mind of the 'detective'. However, the 'signs and signals' within this text promise only the revelation of another *mystery* 'that mankind disna ken naething about'. In a sense, the situation of the reader is itself not sufficiently distinguishable from that of the persecuted; the mode of narration prevents the resolution of

questions left unanswered by the text, but that state of irresolution (rooted as it is, in the false choice between a story of the supernatural and paranoid delusion) was what initiated the writing of Schreber's *Memoirs*. This perpetuation of perplexity, the 'continual suspension which keeps us engaged' (Punter 1980, 158), is an effect of 'paranoid textuality'; a form of writing about madness that releases the mechanisms of that madness⁴ not only from the confines of character and into the mode of narration, but beyond this, into its reading — where differentiation between 'writer' and 'reader' has been undermined, and equally implicated in the provocation to account for the unaccountable.

PLOTTING THE UNEARTHLY: EDGAR ALLAN POE'S *THE NARRATIVE OF ARTHUR GORDON
PYM OF NANTUCKET*

The Narrative Structure: Internal Disjunction

In his analysis of some of Poe's shorter tales George E. Haggerty proposes that Poe 'is perhaps the first tale-writer to demonstrate the affective power of paranoia...Even though we realize that the narrators are mad, we are incapable of resisting the horrifying force of what in their madness they relate' (1989, 105). *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* is, perhaps, one of the least criticized of Poe's works. Poe is most well-known for his short stories, and for his belief in the 'unity of effect'. The extended nature of this text might suggest that Haggerty's description should no longer apply, that the 'affective power' of the text would be diminished. Whilst sustaining a parity with Schreber's *Memoirs*, this chapter will investigate the possibility that other aspects of Poe's text nevertheless generate such an effect.

In contrast to Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, *Gordon Pym* does not offer so explicit an account of a 'madman's' experience, in that the character of 'Pym' is never objectively treated as insane. In fact, no external perspective is made available. A disturbed psychic state is 'made present' in a more oblique and complex manner than is the case in the former; the analysis of its nature is shifted back and forth between the protagonist's occasional retrospective claims to 'temporary insanity' and certain characteristics of the account in its entirety.

Though this text and Schreber's *Memoirs* might appear to have little in common, they share a basic structural feature. Their narrators draw attention to their advance into a reality that not is shared by the reader they address. *Gordon Pym* tells a story of the speaker's journey into unexplored regions of the globe. Schreber's narrative gives an account of his unique experience of phenomena of which the rest of humanity is ignorant. Both texts show themselves as encountering the difficulty of representing that which is beyond the conventional universe of signification.

Poe's *Gordon Pym* is not constructed on the basis of plot; progress is sequential rather than operating within a process of cause and effect. As the original title paper runs, *Gordon Pym* 'comprises'

the details of a mutiny and atrocious butchery on board the American brig *Grampus*, on her way to the South Seas, in the month of June, 1827. With an account of the recapture of the vessel by the survivors; their shipwreck and subsequent horrible sufferings from famine; their deliverance by means of the British schooner *Jane Guy*; the brief cruise of this latter vessel in the Antarctic ocean; her capture, and the massacre of her crew among a group of islands in the eighty-fourth parallel of southern latitude; together with the incredible adventures and discoveries still farther south to which that distressing calamity gave rise¹.

Gordon Pym aligns itself with a mode of writing that assumes a structural and imaginative licence, that is based upon series rather than development, and finds its unity in reference to the substantive self. It gives an account of a sea voyage, and the tradition can be traced through Homer (*The Odyssey*), Anglo-Saxon literature², Defoe (*Robinson Crusoe*), Swift (*Gulliver's Travels*) and Melville (*Moby Dick*). It draws upon the style of contemporary 'documentary' accounts and geographical speculation³. Yet it is an adventure story with a difference; encounters with strange external phenomena are compounded in their strangeness by the focus upon their

effects within the mind of the traveller.

The voyage to the South Pole is preceded by a short account of another adventure, which functions as a prelude to the main journey. Pym relates how, at sixteen, he had stolen a boat with his friend Augustus and suffered a terrifying ordeal at sea, which nevertheless fuels Pym's desire to put to sea again. The first part of the *second* voyage takes place with Pym concealed (with his dog Tiger) in the hold of a ship captained by Augustus's father. Pym is imprisoned in the hold for far longer than he had foreseen, and suffers suffocation and starvation. The dog attacks him, but Pym manages to save his life. Meanwhile the ship's crew have mutinied, having murdered the sailors who resisted. Pym and Augustus plot, with the aid of another sailor (Dirk Peters) to overcome them. They do so, but a storm blows up and destroys the ship, leaving the three and another man (Parker) to die of thirst and starvation, stranded on the upturned hulk. They are rescued (except Parker, who they have eaten following the drawing of lots) by a ship originally bound for the South Pacific which changes its course for the Antarctic. Landing on a strange island, Pym and others are attacked by its inhabitants. Most of the crew are killed. Pym and Peters escape in a canoe and sail on Southward. The phenomena they encounter take on an increasingly unearthly character, until finally they sail toward a huge white veil or cataract, where a large white figure stands sentinel, and here the narrative ends.

The uncharted nature of a voyage into unknown regions is part of the attraction of such texts; the psychical stress undergone and survived by the speaker reaffirms the security of the self. Similarly in the case of the 'memoir', a peculiarly artificial narratorial control is to be imposed upon the chaotic, unconnected and unpredictable nature of lived events.

The focus is upon the story-teller, who is both the subject of the represented experience, its retrospective chronicler (in this case the sole remaining witness) and the guarantor of the safety of the self caught up in the 'moving viewpoint'⁴ constituted by the text. Belief in the integrity of the narrator (his psychic 'intactness', his identity with the 'I' of the recorded experience, his non-mediated 'presence') underwrites the completeness of his testimony and establishes the level of credibility necessary for the reader's unproblematic access to the fictional world. The 'presence' of the protagonist as narrator invests the writing with a singularly inductive power.

There are, however, intrinsic to both Pym's and Schreber's efforts to record their experience, elements which render the narratives less than reassuring. Not least of these is that the integrity of speaking subject is problematized. Poe's narrator continually renders his account unreliable by paying as much attention to recording his unstable mental states as to the events that unfold around him, to the extent that they become indistinguishable. Schreber, on the other hand, felt that enough attention had been already drawn to his psychic instability and preferred to find ways of rejecting this attitude (which had nevertheless to be raised in order to be refuted) in favour of investing his experiences with objective reality. The result, however, is similar; they are caught up in a twilight zone where the boundaries between mindscape and landscape are taut and rent.

Pym's presentation of his experience throughout is that of a person in conditions of psychological and physical extremity. His survival and sanity constantly depend upon the successful deciphering of the cause, origins or logic operating behind threatening phenomena and events. The

narrative begins by launching into the oldest symbolic enigma of all, the sea. The incidents to be narrated are said to be of a 'positively marvellous nature', and most interesting in 'that portion which relate[s] to the Antarctic Ocean' (43). Yet the first abortive escapade with Augustus functions, on several levels, as an informative paradigm for the narrative of the voyage toward the South Pole which follows. Augustus is a *storyteller* and often fires Pym's imagination with fantasy adventures. This time he decides, with Pym, to have a 'real' adventure. Once out to sea Pym asks Augustus about the expectations he should entertain toward the journey they are undertaking, to find that Augustus suddenly appears a menacing helmsman;

I now asked my companion what course he intended to steer, and what time he thought it probable we should get back. He whistled for a few minutes, and then said crustily, 'I am going to sea - you may go home if you think proper'...I found that something had gone wrong, and became seriously alarmed (49).

Pym is filled with an 'indescribable feeling of dread', until it flashes upon him that Augustus is drunk. Augustus is in a 'highly concentrated state of intoxication - a state which like madness, frequently enables the victim to imitate the outward demeanour of one in perfect possession of his senses' (50). This state of consciousness is reproduced, to varying degrees, in Pym. When the occasion eventually arises for Pym to venture into the heart of this unknown territory his comment is curiously reminiscent of Schreber's;

So tempting an opportunity of solving the great problem in regard to an Antarctic continent had never yet been afforded to man...I must still be allowed to feel some degree of gratification at having been instrumental, however remotely, in opening to the eye of science to one of the most intensely exciting secrets which has ever engrossed its attention' (186-7).

The search for an answer, the desire to fill in a cognitive gap first

suggested here in terms of the gulf between the rational and the irrational² self glimpsed in Augustus, has been mapped onto geographical coordinates. In the course of Pym's journey an internal discontinuity or rupture may be said, through this structural association, to have been projected onto a world both contiguous with the 'real' world but also (as Schreber admits to suspecting) somehow alien. Like Schreber, Pym transforms his own sufferings, and the transcription of that experience, into a mission to serve the world.

Narrative Technique: Impaired Testimony

Long before Schreber or Poe, Dante wrote an account combining the 'memoir' form and the idea of a journey both physical and psychical (undertaken at considerable risk to the pilgrim) where the 'unknown' factor is presented as supernatural, but of the foremost importance for the survival of humanity. Like Schreber and Pym, Dante — as both narrator and protagonist — styles himself the purveyor of cosmic truth. Dante's 'Dante' is firmly established as a go-between, journeying forth from a historical Italy to eternal realms — still 'unexplored' — but which were held in contemporary religious doctrine to have a 'spiritual' reality. These terms, in this historical context, are not mutually contradictory, since the earthly realm was held to supplement the reality of the spiritual. In Schreber's *Memoirs* the reliability of the speaking subject, and the plenitude of the account, are threatened as he writes (he acknowledges) by unease founded in his inability to offer sufficient material referential to the familiar 'real' world, and by the fact that mention of an unseen world is already more than suspect. In Poe's text the inverse is the case; the familiarity of the invoked reality is progressively undermined by the intimated

unreliability of the speaking subject.

Poe's text begins with Arthur Gordon Pym raising questions about the status of his own narrative. In his 'preface' to the account of his journey Pym writes of his reluctance to begin the 'true' story of his adventures on paper. He finds that the reception of his text as a rational, credible account will be jeopardized should he decide to attempt a subjective narration of his story;

I feared I should not be able to write, from mere memory, a statement so minute and connected as to have the appearance of that truth it would really possess, barring only the natural and unavoidable exaggeration to which all of us are prone when detailing events which have had powerful influence in exciting the imaginative faculties (43).

He doubts his ability to organize his experience into narrative form. He questions the truth status of any story that recounts an experience which has had a powerful affect upon its narrator. Untrained in the rigours of poetic decorum, subject to a potentially over-reactive imagination and a lack of objectivity, Pym fears the transformation of his truth into what would be seen as an over-blown sensationalism. Another reason for his reluctance to begin is that,

the incidents to be related were of a nature so positively marvellous that, unsupported as my assertions must necessarily be...the public at large would regard what I should put forth as merely impudent and ingenious fiction' (43).

He is at a loss as to how to augment his insufficient authority. Pym makes appeal (like Schreber) to a framing discourse, to the power of science to authenticate his story, and potentially to invest it with extraordinary significance. In its latter portions his narrative he says

will be found to include incidents of a nature so entirely out of the range of human experience, and for this reason so far beyond the limits of human credulity, that I proceed in utter hopelessness of obtaining credence for all I shall tell, yet confidently trusting in time and progressing science to verify some of the most important

and most improbable of my statements (85).

In that instant, however, Pym is constrained by a more convenient method of authentication. Pym's subjective 'I' hands over the task to another narrator. Pym resolves his predicament by placing his story in the hands of the 'Poe' persona who, as a fictionalist, could be relied upon to communicate his tale in a more convincing manner. Having seen a portion of his tale presented by 'Poe' to the public as fiction, but received as fact, he decides to reconstruct the rest for publication himself. Pym tells us that where his speech ends and 'Poe's' begins will be immediately obvious, but this turns out not to be the case. The consistency of subjective testimony is of paramount importance for the reception of such a tale, yet Pym has put his story into the hands of a 'real' fabricator - a professional deceiver - in order to have it seem more 'real'. The device of drawing attention to the difficulty of writing and communicating his experience, and then having it related by an author who was not a witness to the events concerned, is disruptive of the status of the text in the manner that Hogg's 'Hogg' proved to be. There is the same collision between the real and the unreal, fantasy and actuality. Instead of evoking an investment of belief it foregrounds the state of 'delusion' evoked by the fictionalist, and suspends the narration in a limbo of authorial uncertainty. Pym's assertions that 'Poe's' work was carried out 'without altering or distorting a single fact', and that 'no fact is misrepresented in the first few pages which were written by Mr. Poe' (44) alert the reader to the possibility of misrepresentation. By drawing attention to the importance of the secure status of the 'I' behind the utterance, and then exposing its slipperiness, Poe evokes anxiety within and around the text. Suspicion is generated about who and where the narrative voice is

coming from. The strategies are similar; Schreber wanted to emphasise coherence, Pym - ostensibly attempting the same thing - achieves the opposite effect.

In both Schreber's and Poe's narrations the insistence of the 'I' on giving precise co-ordinates in space and time, self-consciously 'for the reader' is also counteracted by the impression of a self subject to a fundamental dislocation at the moment of experience. Pym's 'prefatory' nightmarish tale of shipwreck, and near-death by drowning, is reassuringly introduced with convincing geographical coordinates. He puts out from where he was born - Nantucket. He was educated in New Bedford. He meets Augustus and hears of sea voyages in New Bedford. Yet once launched out to sea this certainty is disrupted. This kind of disturbance fascinates Pym, he dreams of 'a lifetime dragged out in sorrow and tears, upon some gray and desolate rock, in an ocean unapproachable and unknown' (57). The adventure is initiated by Augustus's drunkenness, and the tale reels from loss of control to disaster. Events become increasingly horrific and hallucinatory. As the boat is battered in the darkness by a violent sea, Pym hears 'a loud and long scream or yell, as if from the throats of a thousand demons' which seemed 'to pervade the whole atmosphere around and above the boat' (51). Through extreme terror, the protagonists experience peculiar psychic states, which include dissociation from their bodies, and loss of the ability to reason. This prelude, then, frames the main text in the sense that it defines its status for his audience. It predicts psychological disturbance at the core of a tale of geographical exploration.

As we move into the main narrative itself we witness a process by which the stability of the speaking 'I', the bearer and 'authenticator' of

the tale, is further jeopardized. Pym finds his mental condition to be precarious;

I have before stated more than once that my intellect, for some period prior to this, had been in a condition nearly bordering on idiocy. There were, to be sure, momentary intervals of perfect sanity, and, now and then, even of energy, but these were few...(74).

The narrative spins into confusion, with Pym entombed in the dark hold of the ship dream is confused with waking, connections between ideas disintegrate, a reliance upon memory is the only available method of establishing the reality of his condition. The demarcation of time is demonstrably impossible:

Getting hold of the watch, I found, upon applying it to my ear, that it had run down; but at this I was not at all surprised, being convinced, from the peculiar state of my feelings, that I had slept, as before, for a very long period of time; how long it was of course impossible to say (67).

Yet the narrative continues to operate as if the subject were in 'perfect possession of his senses'. Incredible and terrifying events are 'pinned' together with the 'outward demeanour' of a seaman's journal. Details of latitude and longitude create the assurance of events taking place in reference to 'real' locations; 'On the twenty-sixth, at noon, we were in latitude 63° 23' S., longitude 41° 25' W. We now saw several ice islands...' (182). Via the coordinates of a 'hyper-objective' reality, the narrative has been pushed out to the abstracted limits, the margins of the 'real' world. 'Many unusual phenomena now indicated that we were entering upon a region of novelty and wonder' (236); 'March 9th. The white ashy material fell now continually around us...' (238). However, even the precision of these measurements is radically undermined. An annotation to his March 1st entry reads, 'For obvious reasons I cannot pretend to strict accuracy in these dates. They are given principally with a view to perspicuity of

narration' (236). Pym speaks of the falsity of his referring to day and night when no such alternation any longer occurred.

From early on in his narration Pym has operated in the vigilant (but frequently unsuccessful) 'detective' mode of a disorientated mind proposing and discovering connections. Pym is enclosed, metaphorically and literally, in darkness, urgently trying to discover a way out. Stowed away in the hold, condemned to remain there concealed until (as was initially decided) enough time has passed for the ship to have gained the open seas, he himself gradually becomes more cut off from 'reality'. He becomes convinced that far more time has passed than should have been the case. On attempting to get out he finds the trap door is immovable. He believes he has been abandoned, his survival is threatened;

My sensations were of extreme horror and dismay. In vain I attempted to reason on the probable cause of my being thus entombed. I could summon up no connected chain of reflection, and sinking on the floor, gave way, unresistingly, to the most gloomy imaginings, in which the dreadful deaths of thirst, famine, suffocation, and premature internment, crowded upon me as the prominent disasters to be encountered (70).

Eventually there returns to him 'some portion of presence of mind' and he begins to explore his situation in a more logical manner. By accident he discovers a piece of paper tied to his dog,

the thought instantly occurred to me that the paper was a note from Augustus, and that some unaccountable accident having happened to prevent his relieving me from my dungeon, he had devised this method of acquainting me with the true state of affairs (72).

He laboriously deduces a method by which he can procure sufficient light to read the note. Examining only one side he finds no message and tears the paper to pieces. It then occurs to him that something may nevertheless have been written on the other side and endeavours to piece the paper together. He discovers a message, but has only sufficient

light left to read one part of it. This institutes more desperate hypothesizing,

Augustus had, undoubtedly, good reasons for wishing me to remain concealed, and I formed a thousand surmises as to what they could be - but I could think of nothing affording a satisfactory solution of the mystery (76).

He resigns himself to 'all the misery of his fate'. Later on, when they find themselves shipwrecked, a ship passes which the survivors imagine gratefully will be their salvation. The ship sails on past, strewn with grinning corpses. Pym offers the retrospective information that he has, 'since this period, vainly endeavoured to obtain some clew to the hideous uncertainty which enveloped the fate of the stranger' but concludes that 'it is utterly useless to form conjectures where all is involved, and will no doubt, remain forever involved, in the most appalling and unfathomable mystery' (134). As they sail deeper into the heart of the unknown, mysterious things seem increasingly likely to remain so. Simultaneously Pym's encyclopaedic approach to his experience is exaggerated. He exhibits what Barthes might have termed, 'an excess of precision, a kind of maniacal exactitude of language, a descriptive madness' (1975, 26). He provides, for example, a minute description of the wildlife to be found upon 'Desolation Island' (166-169). He relates the discoveries and fates of all the (failed) expeditions there had so far been to the South Pole. Detailed notation of flora and fauna, and of alien human behaviour patterns run throughout. Subjective disorientation is belied by this inordinately precise approach to environment and what happens around him. He builds up the expectation that the world of the text still functions in accord with the world being mapped by contemporary explorers and that, as a detective novel may demand, there will eventually be found a rational explanation for

everything that occurs in the narrative.

Pym's precarious mental state finds its correlative in the irrational and phantasmagoric quality of the regions into which he voyages. E. H. Davidson (1976, 169) has suggested that *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* is

a symbolic parable of how the mind moves from an assumed coherence and reality of things to a recognition that everything, even the most logically substantial, is an illusion; the mind makes its own reality.

Pym, however, never articulates this recognition. He continues to search for coherence in a manner which imparts an apparent objective status to external phenomena. The kind of philosophical awareness imparted to Poe's narration here is precisely what his narrative technique precludes (whether or not, on reflection, the reader may master it in this fashion). Instead of the activity of explicitly attempting to write cognitive irresolution, and entrapment in psychotic delusion, *out of the text* (this is Schreber's main concern), Poe is implicitly, from the beginning, writing it in.

Pym's Paranoid Logic

Pym suspects a profound significance behind events as they take place. The narrative logic evokes the feeling that however marvellous, savage, or supernatural, the substance of Pym's tale is neither characterizable as 'ingenious fiction', nor delusion, but *means something* on a global and even cosmic scale.

It is the ending of the book that has most concerned recent readings of *Pym*. This voyage of exploration to the pole ends as Pym's goal is obscured by a tremendous white cataract spread across the sea, and a vast white figure barring the way through. All that Pym can see is a

phantasmagoria of black and white. Reaching the pole, reaching the end and reaching a meaning are expected to happen simultaneously.

This expectation is provoked throughout the text by Pym's emphatic use of dualistic thinking operating in a similar manner to Schreber's. The first tale introduces a recurring psychological manoeuvre of Pym's⁷, which involves attributing psychological disturbance, inadequate reasoning powers, and persecutory intentions to an 'other'. These oppositional or 'doubling' formations have been identified both in Schreber's *Memoirs* and Hogg's *Sinner* (Schreber's narrative, for example, proposes the existence of another Schreber of 'lesser intellect' and the threatening figure of 'God', Robert Wringham is obsessed with his brother's damnation and hounded by Gil Martin). Pym recognizes fear, delusion, madness, vulnerability and destruction in this 'other' in moments of the greatest stress, preserving an odd kind of detachment for himself. In contrast to Schreber's process this 'other' may be the means by which he recognizes himself as disturbed. It mirrors what Pym fears will happen to him, and may destroy him. There is an overt and repetitive conceptual patterning operating within Pym's narration based upon an oscillation between life and death, destruction and survival, 'self' and 'other', clarity and obscurity, sense and non-sense.

The first threat to his sanity, and his life, is the companion to his imprisonment in the hold, his dog Tiger. Tiger is introduced at the end of a dream, as 'some huge and real monster' (66). On rising from his mattress Pym's conceptions are 'in a state of the greatest indistinctness and confusion', he cannot account for the presence of the dog. Tiger then becomes his solace and counterpart, but suddenly (like Augustus in the former escapade) turns into a menace, a thoroughly irrational and dangerous entity. Soon after being attacked by Tiger, Pym is 'redeemed

from the jaws of the tomb' (80). On another occasion, Pym is stranded on a wrecked ship far out in the ocean without food or water. It is his companions and not he, he concludes, who have lost their minds. Pym retains his 'powers of mind in a surprising degree, while the rest were completely prostrated in intellect' (139). Yet having enabled this distinction to be made, anxiety is renewed as to the condition of this helmsman/narrator;

It is possible, however, that my companions may have entertained the same opinion of their own condition as I of mine...this is a matter which cannot be determined (139).

Their 'intellects were so entirely disordered by the long course of privation and terror to which we had been subjected that we could not justly be considered, in that period, in the light of rational beings' (158).

If Pym's 'other' is differentiated as mad in place of him (like Schreber's double) he, as narrator, establishes his own reliability. However, the text retains the paranoid characteristic on the subjective level of Pym's experience, undermining ventured modes of distinguishing between them, because ultimately his ability to distinguish between madness and sanity, reality and delusion is not secure.

Pym also encounters his reflection in a mirror. On one occasion he finds that it is necessary to dress as a dead crewman (in order to frighten the mutineers). He decides to give the impression of a ghostly visitation, in order to gain control over the ship through the arousal of terror (in his own experience this has disabled his intellectual faculties). Before emerging on deck Pym catches sight of himself in a mirror and is shocked at what he sees. He experiences (as Wringham does) complete alienation from his reflection. He is alive, but this image he has created suggests that he is not;

As I viewed myself in a fragment of looking glass which hung up in the cabin, and by the dim light of a kind of battle lantern, I was so impressed with a vague sense of awe at my appearance, and at the recollection of the terrific reality which I was thus representing, that I was seized with a violent tremor, and could scarcely summon resolution to go on with my part. It was necessary, however, to act with decision... (113).

On this occasion Pym is masquerading as a man risen from the dead. This odd syncretism of life and death is accompanied by the splitting of the self into object and subject, and this phenomenon itself mirrors an earlier sensation of Pym's in the prefatory tale when he observes a body being rescued by crewmen from drowning, and oddly adds 'the body proved to be my own' (53). On another occasion Pym looks on with avid interest as a savage (also, clearly, an opposite and an 'other') from the island of Tsalal encounters *his* own mirror image. He fully expects the savage's reaction to be one of extreme irrational fear and astonishment, rather than curiosity;

Upon raising his eyes and seeing his reflected self in the glass, I thought the savage would go mad; but, upon turning short round to make a retreat, and beholding himself a second time in the opposite direction, I was afraid he would expire on the spot. No persuasions could prevail upon him to take another look; but throwing himself on the floor, with his face buried in his hands, he remained thus until we were obliged to drag him upon deck (191).

There is a sense in which this configuration is representative of the mechanism of Pym's narration. This evidence of the characteristic reversals of Pym's perceptions and logic suggest that his narration might be comprised of responses to something that has existence only within the space of Pym's tortured psyche but is then accounted for as alien, external, and threatening. The 'terrific reality' he is physically representing might also refer, psychically, to the story he is telling, its dramatic and disruptive effect depending upon a confusion between mindscape and landscape. Whilst Pym reads his experience and plots his

narrative, he is, like Schreber, speculating; looking into the mirror of his madness, recognizing himself as 'other'. In the above passage his response to his mirror image almost brings about a total lack of self control, his survival, however, depends upon the success of his masquerade, the solidity and coherence of his pretence.

Toward the close of the narrative, the narrative logic involves the reduction of experience into differentiation between black and white. The narrative opens in darkness, with a lack of light for any temporal, geographical or visual orientation. The night of the first adventure is replaced by the gloom of the ship's hold, 'the most loathsome and horrible of dungeons' (79). Whilst imprisoned in the hold Pym has a dream of dark water (a potent symbol of the unconscious). He sees trees whose 'roots were concealed in wide-spreading morasses, whose dreary water lay intensely black...' (65). The black and mysterious gathers significance, and appears to offer the key to further patterns of meaning in the text⁹.

The conclusion of his tale then makes a statement about the discovery of whiteness, 'from out of the milky depths of the ocean a luminous glare arose...' (238). Pym, Peters (and a captured islander, Nu-Nu) in their small boat are 'nearly overwhelmed by [a] white ashy shower'. Black and white meet at the pole, the presence of one militating against the ubiquity of the other,

The darkness increased relieved only by the glare of the water thrown back from the white curtain before us. Many gigantic and pallidly white birds flew continuously now from behind the veil... (238-9).

Finally their way is barred by a white apparition,

there arose in our pathway a huge human figure, very far larger in its proportions than any dweller among men. And the hue of the figure was of the perfect whiteness of snow (239).

Poe sets up the conditions of meaning, and then defies the reader to find it. Black does not mean 'bad' to begin with, in the case of the natives, but simply 'other'. When they manifest signs of evil they are not so much barbaric and uncivilized as 'treacherous', highly intelligent (rather than 'savage') and deceptive. On the island of Tsalal, Pym finds himself in a situation analogous to that of being endlessly interred in the 'dungeon' of the ship's hold. He and several companions find themselves in a chasm buried beneath a massive earth fall. At this point the perceived oppositional organization of external phenomena gives rise to a similar process of reasoning *in extremis* (confronted by death and for the preservation of life). By a process of deduction Pym decides that the treachery of the natives, who had put together a 'deeply laid plan' (205) has brought this about. He goes into the minutae of how (but not why) they must have effected this murderous act (211-2). 'Calculation' becomes a key word. Whilst in hiding as the only survivors of this disaster Pym, with his strange half-caste (not black, not white) friend Dirk Peters, discovers another chasm. The windings of this chasm and 'indentures' in the rock appear to Pym to be of some profound significance, resembling as they do a pattern of hieroglyphic characters. They remain unable to make sense of them however, and unable to find a way out. White, on the other hand, though conventionally associated with 'good' arouses fear in the natives of Tsalal. Where these signifiers appear their expected *signified* is either missing or transformed. Poe's polar journey is a journey into polarization, but although one thing may stand opposed to another, significance is deceptive, distorted or unattainable.

Plotting the Unearthly: The Text

It has been proposed that the enigmatic non-closure of Pym's narrative indicates an artistic failure on Poe's part⁹. I would suggest the 'framing' of the text demonstrates Poe's control over its 'treacherous' signifying mechanism. The note of the anonymous editor at the end, attempting explanation, trying to construct a coherent reading, finally invests the text with a focus upon 'plotting' rather than upon 'plot'. This editor discovers the 'meaning' of the shapes in the chasms that appeared to Pym. He believes they are in the form of hieroglyphics;

Mr. Pym has given us the figures of the chasms without comment, and speaks decidedly of the *indentures* found at the extremity of the most easterly as having but a fanciful appearance to alphabetical characters, and, in short, as being positively *not such* (241).

He goes on to explain that according to Arabic and Ethiopian writing the figures *could* mean 'to be white', 'to be shady', and 'the region of the south' (241). His interpretation does no more than return, tautologically, to the meaning structures intrinsic to the text, although the editor offers this additional information as a valuable discovery without which the text is incomprehensible and incomplete. The editor's contribution is a parody of critical endeavour, and this ploy of Poe's has been the focus of much literary critical attention, which discovers in it possibilities for the contribution it makes to the theoretical analysis of critical discourse itself¹⁰. It is sufficient to notice here that this is the second model that Poe provides for the reading of Pym's main narrative. In the prefatory tale Pym's reader is implicitly manipulated into responding to a certain kind of emphasis (horrific and psychological) in the narrative which is to follow. This works to implicate the reader within the threatened subjectivity of the narrator. The appendix spoken by the figure

of the editor, however, provokes a withdrawing into an objective relation to the text as a problem to be solved, instituting a split.

This model invites the retrospective analysis of the text. The editor affirms that information about the outcome of Pym's journey is missing. There is a large and perhaps decisive gap in the reader's knowledge. The narrative ends with Pym sailing towards a mysterious white veil of cosmic proportions and encountering an inexplicable huge white figure. The last few chapters which might explain this are lacking. The objective dissociation from his irrational experience has involved Pym in adopting a speculative tone comparable to Schreber's, speaking in terms of things being absolutely certain, or probable, or conceivable. Poe's text also provokes and demands hypothesis. Mystery is continually perpetuated and Pym's narration ends with this renewal of mystery, a symbol of lost significance. The huge white figure seems to mean everything but is finally inexplicable. Pym could be mad and hallucinating - or the 'figure' may simply be an iceberg. It may be supernatural but still its presence is not satisfactorily ratified by the accumulation of sign and symbol in the narrative. The text now represents an enigma, and the editor has a theory; he believes that an understanding of what the hieroglyphs *mean* may help to fill any gaps in our understanding, that upon the application of 'minute philological scrutiny' connections must develop (242). He says,

conclusions such as these open a wide field for speculation and exciting conjecture. They should be regarded, perhaps, in connection with some of the most faintly detailed incidents of the narrative; although in no visible manner is this chain of connection complete (242).

The 'loss' of the last chapters means that the 'intensely exciting secret' which Pym professes to actuate the trajectory of the narrative remains concealed - its crucial significance proclaimed, its message lost.

Ultimately it designates a vacuum; abandoned by the (already hollowed-out) narrating self upon which so much has been staked (leaving cognitive dry land has demanded an unusual act of faith in the speaking subject) the implied reader is left suspended within the text to fill this vacuum. Upon this replenishment depends the integrity of the self.

• Unlike Schreber's *Memoirs*, Poe's text as an 'authorized' fictional text is assumed not to be the writing of a possible candidate for the insane asylum. The text is whole, complete, in the sense that it is framed by the author's signature. However, the fact that Pym himself draws attention to this ('in order that it might be certainly regarded as fiction, the name of Mr. Poe was affixed...') removes this guarantee. The narrator has already been 'split', and testimony betrayed. Poe creates a state whereby the frame is turned inside out, invalidated. Meaning is disrupted by 'Poe' appearing as Pym's 'writing hand', by illusion masquerading as reality becoming illusion again - in order to make it more convincing. The point here is not that the author may be considered psychologically disturbed, but that he introduces *paranoid conditions* for the reading of his text. Anxiety is invoked by the assault upon the identity, integrity, the trust in the presence of the speaker. *Pym* is a paranoid text in that it plays upon the fear of madness, where madness is understood as the state of *being caught* deciphering in an abysmal spiral of non-meaning. Gordon Pym might be considered a fine example of the state analogous to 'psychosis' that Shoshanna Felman attributes to the activity of interpreting any fictional text; 'madness is nothing other than an intoxicating reading: a madman is one who is drawn into the dizzying whirl of his own reading. Dementia is, above all, the madness of books; delirium an adventure of the text' (1985, 64). *Gordon Pym* takes this one step further, disclosing to

the reader his colonization by the madness of the text, and invoking (through the editor) Schreber's Sisyphean task of recuperation and recovery.

Neither reader (and Pym is the primary reader of his own experience) nor 'writer' (which is what the reader becomes) can distinguish the 'real' from the non-real, the internal from the external. The narrator has been said to journey 'through the mundane world of multiple deception toward an apocalyptic vision of arabesque reality' (Ketterer 1979, 125), but this movement is also synchronic, occurring from moment to moment; it is as difficult to see where the mundane world ends and the unearthly begins, as to distinguish between the narratives of Pym and 'Poe', between reader and writer, between reason and madness. The paranoid mechanism involves the imperative to discover truth in delusion. Poe's text enacts this process on several levels. Freud observed that the paranoiac 'perceives the external world and takes into account any alterations that may happen in it, and the effect it makes upon him stimulates him to invent explanatory theories' (1979, 214). Schreber recalls a time when he found it hard to accept that the changes in external phenomena had not been connected with his experience:

Having resumed some contact with the outside world...I can now no longer refuse to acknowledge that *viewed merely from outside* everything has remained as of old. *But whether a very profound inner change has taken place nevertheless* will be discussed (1988, 85).

Pym's experience, too, is construable in terms of his interrogative rapport with experience. Those textual strategies that are similar to Schreber's (and often enlisted in his narration in order to allay suspicion) function equivocally or inversely and exploit the affective properties of psychic

disorientation. The refusal of closure, is, in a sense, a refusal to close down 'madness'; the text is actually releasing it.

PLOTTING THE DIABOLICAL: ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON'S 'THE STRANGE CASE OF
DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE'

Narrative Structure: A Composite Account

Stevenson's tale has become so well-known since its publication in 1886 that it hardly needs an introduction. The title is proverbial, and is probably used as frequently as the terms 'schizophrenic' and 'paranoid' to describe contradictory, obsessive or weird personality traits. This text is distinct from the previous works in that explicitly psychotic states of consciousness are not the focus of narrative attention. Though this is commonly approached as a story of split personality or 'doubling', it is with more difficulty that these manifestations are assigned to 'madness'. The 'division' of Jekyll is, on one level, more closely related to science fiction, than to fictional investigations of insanity. However, though Jekyll's transformations into Hyde are presented as the result of scientific experiment, the text has been included in this study for the similarity it bears in other respects to narrative features of the works by Hogg and Poe. Moreover, as I hope to show, that 'scientific' dimension of the tale is closer in essence to their representations of psychic disruption than may be supposed.

The text is split into *three* main narratives. The first is a third person narration in the conventional 'realist' mode, but largely limited to the point-view of one character. Mr. Utterson (Dr. Jekyll's close friend and lawyer) creates the perspective from which the incidents connected with Jekyll are initially recorded. This narrative accounts for around two-thirds of the text. Utterson's experience is divided into episodes

designating a series of experiences that he regards as extraordinary and inexplicable.

The first ('The Story of the Door') involves a discussion between Utterson and Mr. Enfield (an acquaintance) of the fact that a back door to Jekyll's very respectable establishment is being used by a grotesque and repugnant character called Hyde, who unflinchingly tramples a small child in the street, and offers to pay for the offence with a cheque signed by Dr. Jekyll. The second ('The Search for Mr. Hyde') details an exchange between Dr. Lanyon (a colleague of Dr. Jekyll's) and Utterson, concerning Jekyll's Will, which endows Hyde with all his wealth on his death. Lanyon is of the opinion that Jekyll has been, for some time, 'wrong in mind' (Stevenson 1979, 36). Utterson 'thought it was madness', but decides that it is 'disgrace' (36). He fears for his friend's security and becomes obsessed with the figure of Hyde, deciding to discover more about him. Following this a short passage ('Dr. Jekyll was Quite at Ease') thwarts both Lanyon's and Utterson's hypotheses, as Jekyll appears to be completely sane, and offers a charitable excuse for being Hyde's benefactor. 'The Carew Murder' case gives an account of Hyde's apparently motiveless murder of an old man, witnessed by a maid-servant. Hyde, however, is nowhere to be found; he leaves behind him only 'the haunting sense of unexpressed deformity' (50). 'The Incident of the Letter' records Dr. Jekyll's seeking of Utterson's advice about a letter he has received from Hyde, which informs Jekyll of Hyde's safe escape from justice. It is noted by several people that the hand-writing, though somewhat distorted, is very similar to Jekyll's; Utterson decides that Jekyll has been 'forging for a murderer' (55). 'The Remarkable Incident of Dr. Lanyon' describes a sudden and terrible depression which takes hold of Lanyon; it is somehow connected to

Jekyll. Lanyon subsequently dies. A further brief section ('Incident at the Window') describes Enfield and Utterson's shocked reaction to catching a glimpse of Jekyll's face at a window as it suddenly, and unaccountably, takes on an expression of 'abject terror and despair' (61). Finally, 'The Last Night' gives an account of Utterson's experience at the scene of Hyde's suicide. Jekyll, though thought to have been present, has mysteriously vanished.

Utterson then gains access to a series of documents, and the second narration (from among these) is Lanyon's record of his final encounters with Jekyll, his fears for Jekyll's sanity and finally his witnessing of the doctor's transformation into Hyde. The text concludes with 'Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case'.

The first narrative begins with no preliminary attention to the nature of the tale to be told; no mediation, no preparation, no passage forged between the extraordinary and the ordinary (as is the case in the *Sinner* and *Gordon Fym*). It is a vehicle for reporting others' versions of the story, for dramatic representation. It is an authoritative voice (drawing, as it can, upon 'its effacement of its own status as discourse' (Belsey 1980, 72). Stevenson, in contrast to Hogg and Poe, has chosen a method of narration which simply posits the events transcribed as fact (there are no negotiations with subjective testimony, hearsay, memory, conjecture). The impersonal narration offers a stable, objective reality and narratorial reliability. It is rooted in an ordered, recognizable world, which operates according to recognized laws. The point-of-view is emphatically that of a mind conversant with the social laws regulating people's behaviour and, to an extent, with the metaphysical laws that underwrite those laws. The first words are, 'Mr. Utterson the lawyer...'.

Utterson's perspective upon the case has the appearance, in its brevity and precision, of a legal file. He focusses only upon 'incidents' that he judges to be of significance in the efficient reconstruction of Jekyll's history, and for the eventual solution to the mystery that surrounds the initiating 'story of the door'.

Mr. Utterson's point-of-view, in his professional capacity, depends upon a particular kind of logic, upon the ability to assess a situation correctly in terms of the law. He represents authority. He maintains a system that encompasses codes of honour and morality, and expresses constant and entrenched modes of thinking and believing. He is a 'lover of the sane and customary sides of life, to whom the fanciful is immodest' (36). To begin with, the growing mystery around his friend Mr. Jekyll 'touched him on the intellectual side alone' (37). This is the comfortable and commonsense point-of-view that was also provided by the editor in Hogg's *Sinner*. He is on the outside, looking in on some arcane failure of order, a rent in the carefully woven fabric of this world, and it is his concern to knit it together with scraps of report and conjecture based upon 'incidents'.

With regard to the narrative framing of Dr. Jekyll's personal record, Utterson's approach functions in a similar way to that of Hogg's Editor; the mystery with which he deals is approached in terms of a social crime, a transgression of mundane laws. The law is enlisted in the unravelling of the mystery (an officer investigates the murder of Carew). Gestures are made toward the solution of the crime according to traditional methods, in the public domain. Unlike Hogg's Editor, however, Utterson is himself a lawyer, his narration is invested with a new tension, it is not merely reportage but pursuit. All that Utterson represents is measured

against the enigma he confronts. He is an agent in the unfolding of the plot.

Whilst investing the narration with urgency, Utterson's personal affinity with Jekyll also challenges his legal objectivity. Glimpses into his mind reveal this lack of distance. He recognizes the tortured subjectivity of his friend. He thinks not only in terms of the law of the state, but also of the law of God. When the *insane* and *uncustomary* sides of life begin to emerge around him (as, for example, when Hyde 'mows down' a small girl, and when Jekyll wills all his worldly goods to Hyde) his 'imagination was also engaged, or rather enslaved' (37). He subscribes to a spiritual code of belief (similar, in its preoccupation with guilt and transgression, to that of the 'justified sinner'). He has recourse to this to explain the predicament of Dr. Jekyll:

"Ah, it must be that; the ghost of some old sin, the cancer of some concealed disgrace; punishment coming, *pede claudo*, years after the memory has forgotten and self-love condoned the fault". And the lawyer, scared by the thought, brooded awhile on his past, groping in all the corners of memory lest by chance some Jack-in-the-Box of an old iniquity should leap to light there. His past was fairly blameless; few men could read the rolls of their life with less apprehension; yet he was humbled to dust by the many ill things he had done, and raised up into sober and fearful gratitude by the many he had come so near to doing, yet avoided (42).

Either Jekyll has offended God, or he has been the victim of another's social deviance, though the two are not incompatible in Utterson's estimation. His view-point enlists two interpretative codes as the narrative progresses toward the 'solution' of the mystery, and toward Dr. Jekyll's final statement: God's plot - divine retribution - is already perhaps in motion (the subject of which is Jekyll's soul), Jekyll also appears to be engaged in criminal activity (the subject of which is his body, or social being).

Narrative Technique: The Failure of Syncretism

Uttersen's narrative opens with a series of oppositions. 'The Story of the Door' sets up a contrast between the door used by Jekyll (of the elegant main street facade) and the door used by Hyde in a 'certain sinister block of building' bearing marks of 'prolonged and sordid negligence' (30). This block has no window, and 'neither bell nor knocker'. It conceals, rather than admits access. Hyde, Enfield says, 'was a fellow that nobody could have to do with, a really damnable man' whilst Jekyll 'is the very pink of proprieties...one of your fellows who do what they call good' (33). Already the bad Mr. Hyde and the good Mr. Jekyll have been seen by Utterson as linked in a mysterious relationship Utterson is perplexed by the apparent and inexplicable connection between 'good' and 'evil'. He is aroused by the spirit of inquiry; "If he be Mr. Hyde", he had thought, "I shall be Mr. Seek" (38).

Dualistic thinking marks the site of subversion and the initiation of hypothesis. Like Poe in the hold of the ship, Utterson presents an inside/outside interest in relation to the sinister building. It is not simply an interest in revealing the hidden, finding out what is on the other side of the door, that awakens Utterson's curiosity; what grips his imagination is the gap – the logical connection that is lacking and has to be made between what is usually to be found completely separate and opposed. Utterson's friend Enfield is curious about the windowless building, but is unwilling to inquire further. His attitude is that there can be no simple answer. An infinite line of questions building one upon the other develops its own disastrous momentum;

"You never asked about – the place with the door?" said Mr. Utterson. "No sir: I had a delicacy", was the reply. "I feel strongly about putting questions; it partakes too much of the style of the day of judgement. You start a question, and it's like starting a stone. You

sit quietly on top of the hill; and away the stone goes, starting others" (33).

The sinister building proves to be connected to Jekyll's property. Poole (Jekyll's loyal servant) makes clear to Utterson to which part of the house Mr. Hyde belongs;

I saw Mr. Hyde go in by the old dissecting-room door...We see very little of him on this side of the house; he mostly comes and goes by the laboratory (41).

Following the murder of Carew information about Hyde's habitual haunts enforces the polarity between the two in social terms. Jekyll lives in a respectable quarter of London and Hyde in Soho, London's dream-world, 'a district of some city in a nightmare' (48).

Utterson is alerted to the depth of the relationship between Jekyll and Hyde because he is in possession of Jekyll's 'mad will', which promises his estate to Hyde should he die or disappear. He is able to formulate a theory in terms of authorship, examining a series of written 'documents'. The signature on the cheque procured by Jekyll from Hyde is the first clue. Mr. Hyde apparently draws money on Dr. Jekyll's account. The connection is considered to be blackmail. Utterson compares the letter written by Hyde after the murder of Carew with a letter written by Jekyll asking for chemicals. The handwriting is similar. 'What matters hand of write?' Poole asks Utterson (66). Hand of *right* matters to the lawyer. Jekyll's money and estate is at stake. More is also at stake. Besides suggesting the possibility of an illegal exchange, the signature is also enlisted in determining whether another opposition is appropriate to the symbolic Jekyll/Hyde pattern: Is Hyde a madman? How would a madman sign his name? Of what significance is a madman's signature? Utterson's friend Guest is convinced.

"The man of course, was mad".

"I should like to hear your views on that", replied Mr. Utterson. "I have a document here in his handwriting; it is between ourselves, for I scarce know what to do about it; it is an ugly business at the best. But there it is; quite in your way: a murderer's autograph". Guest's eyes brightened, and he sat down at once and studied it with passion. "No, sir" he said; "not mad; but it is an odd hand" (54).

The opposition remains one of criminal/victim, and therefore still within the public domain and objectively accessible. Madness denotes lack of authority, lack of identity and lack of responsibility. It would break down the constellation of oppositions already in place to allow madness into the equation, and is not amenable to either of Utterson's investigative premises (that Jekyll is the subject of spiritual or social guilt). At the moment they add up to Hyde being an independent agent, a parallel identity who is, in a calculated manner, a positive threat to the person they know as Dr. Jekyll. The possibility that it is Jekyll who is mad must be ruled out. Dr. Lanyon's behaviour, following his momentous encounter with Jekyll, convinces Utterson that Lanyon has encountered something so extreme that it holds for him more terror than death. This is the first explicit indication that Utterson will deduce nothing from aligning oppositions within the normal 'order of things'. Meaning is to be found beyond this. In Jekyll, he decides, 'so great and unprepared a change pointed to madness; but in view of Lanyon's manner and words, there must lie for it some deeper ground' (58). The line of opposition has shifted from sane/insane to insane/? Something is involved which invites more terror than madness or death.

Poole has seen Hyde *in possession* of Jekyll's rooms. He makes no deductions on the basis of handwriting. It is no longer just the authority of the signature that appears to have been usurped but Jekyll's space, the concrete rather than the abstract co-ordinates of his existence. He

appeals to Utterson for assistance, believing that Hyde has killed Jekyll. However, the fact that Hyde is still apparently locked in Jekyll's laboratory and has not escaped the scene of the crime raises difficulties, 'it doesn't commend itself to reason' (65). The shift of focus brought about by Miss Logan in Hogg's *Sinner* is here re-enacted. Attention moves away from the murder, from who did it and why, to what it is that has taken his place. Instead of eliminating mystery, Utterson's inquiries lead mystery (as Enfield feared) to multiply, and demand an ever greater resource of rationalization. Poole announces;

Master's made away with; he was made away with eight days ago, when we heard him cry out upon the name of God; and *who's* in there instead of him, and *why* it stays there, is a thing that cries to Heaven, Mr. Utterson! (65).

The scene of the discovery of the body of Hyde at the end of this objective narration also involves the discovery of a mirror. This represents a further mystery to Poole and Utterson. It is enigmatic because it has 'seen' the events that have led up to 'Hyde's' suicide and is therefore the impenetrable repository of the *truth* about what has passed between Jekyll and Hyde ("This glass has seen some strange things, sir", whispered Poole', 71). It is also provocative because its presence at the scene cannot be explained ("And surely none stranger than itself" echoed the lawyer'). It was not only an observer but also, it is suggested, a protagonist in the preceding drama. Jekyll, Hyde and the mirror become a triad and the significance of what has happened lies in the uncovering of the relationship between them, a factor which remains opaque to the

conjecture of the two investigators, just as the mirror at first reflects only an obfuscating play of light and colour;

Next, in the course of their review of the chamber, the searchers came to the cheval-glass, into whose depth they looked with an involuntary horror. But it was so turned as to show them nothing but the rosy glow playing on the roof, the fire sparkling in a hundred repetitions along the glazed front of the presses, and their own pale and fearful countenances stooping to look in (71).

Utterson and Poole look into the glass apparently in the hope that what they see there will reveal to them some clue. The fact that it shows them only their own faces suggests both that they will never find anything but their own unsatisfied curiosity when looking into the 'strange case', and also that somehow the answer may actually lie in the reflection of 'their own pale and fearful countenances'.

Everything suggestive of the presence of Jekyll remains undisturbed in the laboratory; his writing, his signature, the environment demonstrating evidence only of Jekyll's habitual civilized way of life and not that associated with Hyde. Jekyll's body however is *not* there. Resolution is again deferred. Concealed within the documents found with the body (as was the case in Hogg's *Sinner*) lies, perhaps, the answer to the mystery.

Dr. Lanyon's narrative (one of these) does not provide a perspective entirely different from that of Mr. Utterson, but represents an intensification of the opposition between public and private (objective and subjective, the intellect and the imagination, science and superstition). Dr. Jekyll had become 'too fanciful' for his taste, indulging in a lot of 'unscientific balderdash' (36). He is increasingly convinced that Dr. Jekyll is insane, a victim of 'cerebral disease' (77). When he encounters Hyde he

wants to know 'his origin, his life, his fortune and status in the world'. When called upon to carry out a mysterious errand for Dr. Jekyll (of collecting the drug for Hyde) he wonders how the powder could effect 'the honour, the sanity, or the life of [his] flighty colleague' (76). His more radical scepticism, however, is challenged by an encounter with a 'prodigy to stagger the unbelief of Satan' (79). Lanyon's horror hints at the diabolical, surpassing the terrors of madness and death.

Lanyon's narrative is also the locus of the dismantling of these oppositions. He feels an affinity with the strange Mr. Hyde, experiencing a 'subjective disturbance' in his proximity (77). Through his transformation into Hyde, Jekyll assaults Lanyon's faith in orthodox science ('you who have denied the virtue of transcendental medicine...', 80). Lanyon's account brings the mystery to the brink of solution, of the completion of the 'plot', but he finds he cannot finally commit the esoteric explanation of the metamorphosis, imparted to him by Jekyll, to paper. He can no longer write, externalize and objectify his terrifying experience. Dr. Lanyon's life is 'shaken to its roots' (80). The coordinates whereby he had previously orientated his identity have been cast asunder, and Lanyon plummets into dread and confusion, and ultimately death. The certainty offered by social morality, scientific knowledge, religious faith, belief in the consistency of the self and in the determinate limits of sanity that are upheld by Utterson's logic (and sustained *in opposition* to the phenomenon of Mr. Hyde) has disintegrated. Dr. Lanyon's narrative ensures that the continuity of this ideological framework, relative to that which he has witnessed and the truth he is unable to communicate, is impossible. This truth, somehow linked to the impossible incorporation of the

scientific (the natural) and the transcendental (the supernatural) is what 'Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case' is bound to divulge.

Dr. Jekyll's Paranoid Logic

As is the case with Robert Wringham's narrative, the text creates the expectation that what has so far proved elusive will finally be brought to light by Dr. Jekyll. Jekyll's subjective testimony has been framed by a discourse which generates a mode of interrogation characteristic of the paranoid text. The initial problems of what connection Hyde can have with Jekyll, and the possible motivation for blackmail and murder, have *shifted* frames from a mundane criminal investigation to metaphysical speculation. The operative dilemma is now rooted in the rationalization of what appears to be an unnatural occurrence; a subversion of 'God's law' has been brought about.

Jekyll's discourse is characterized by an exceptional clarity of thought. He is regarded by his colleagues as quite brilliant, but eccentric (his 'scientific studies...led wholly towards the mystic and transcendental', 81). He becomes obsessed with the realization that he is constituted of contradictory psychological elements; 'those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature' (81). This condition is equivalent to that of Robert Wringhim in the Hogg's *Sinner*. Jekyll has a problem, he wishes to be respected by the 'wise and good', 'wear a more than commonly grave countenance' (81) and finds that there is a side to himself which is not consistent with this image. He senses a frivolous or mildly sinful element that threatens to undermine his drive toward perfection. He can only wear one face at a time, and that means that a part of him must go faceless. This lack of continuity upsets him,

he finds he is - when functioning under one identity - 'committed to a profound duplicity of life' (81). He is disturbed by the idea that 'in the agonized womb of consciousness these polar twins should be continuously struggling' (82).

Though 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' is often discussed as a splitting of personality, it is important to note that Jekyll feels himself 'always already' to be internally schismatic, and that this awareness of doubleness is ideologically determined; his identity is under stress *before* the introduction of the wonder-drug. He is subject (like Robert Wringham) to the conflict between the purity promoted by an idealist system of thought, and its counterpart - conceived in terms either of original sin or the innate bestiality of the physical self (being rewritten by Darwinism). He is very aware, on an intellectual level, of the possibility not of being, but of becoming two people (a characteristic of many split-personality cases is that one identity is not, and has never been, aware of another, and also that such cases are rarely divisible into only two such clear-cut identities). He says that the medicine 'potently controlled and shook the very fortress of identity' (83), it 'shook the prisonhouse of [his] disposition' (85). This 'fortress of identity' is already menaced by the coexistence of 'good' with 'bad',

I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both; and from an early date, even before the course of my scientific discoveries had begun to suggest the most naked possibility for such a miracle, I had learned to dwell with pleasure, as a beloved daydream, on the thought of the separation of these elements (82).

He therefore sets about devising a 'scientific' method of separating them out, so that each should be free of the other. He discovers a drug which enables the *transition between* states, or between identities. He has

solved the riddle of how to achieve wholeness, and purge the conflicting factors in his identity, through a method as efficient and purificatory as the Calvinist doctrine of election. Science (instead of God) provides him with the means of separating the good from bad and, apparently, with a separate receptacle into which to discard the irritant factor. The internal dichotomy is represented by Jekyll to be as explicit as Schreber's assumption of a female self to exist alongside his masculinity,

[I] managed to compound a drug by which these powers should be dethroned from their supremacy, and a second form and countenance substituted, none the less natural to me because they were the expression, and bore the stamp, of lower elements in my soul (83).

Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde's triumphant statement to Lanyon as he swallows the drug ('you who have so long been bound to the most narrow and material views...— behold!', 81) bears a resemblance to Schreber's obsession with offering his body — dead or alive — to science, so that his transformation into a woman (via the external manipulation of his 'nerves') may be objectively witnessed. The drug, like Schreber's 'nerves', is the product (it produces and was produced by) of a massive theoretical *tour de force*. It is the 'unnatural' mediatory material by which that which was perceived as an unnatural contradiction is rationalized. Jekyll is obsessed with the enigma of his internal disunity and, over many years, develops a scientific and transcendental system of thought to overcome this. The drug is his solution to an existential enigma².

It proves to be not a solution however, but an indication of an even more profound enigma. Despite Jekyll's careful admission of seeing both sides within himself, we are left with the impression that it is Dr. Jekyll who is the 'whole', the controller, the scientist and author, and Hyde the noisome appendage. Hyde however begins to grow, to campaign for hegemony,

to fight for time and space within 'Jekyll's' body. As Hyde's presence and influence increase, Jekyll's perception of his cohabitant takes on aspects now familiar from Robert Wringham's attitude to the diabolical Gil-Martin in Hogg's *Sinner* (when he discovers, for example, that his 'elect' body has been usurped for the execution of heinous actions); Jekyll confesses that;

He had now seen the full deformity of that creature that shared with him some of the phenomena of consciousness, and was co-heir with him to death; and beyond these links of community, which in themselves made the most poignant part of his distress, he thought of Hyde, for all his energy of life, as of something not only hellish but inorganic. This was the shocking thing; that the slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices; that the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned; that what was dead, and had no shape, should usurp the offices of life (95).

Fear of a discontinuous self led him to attempt self-division in order to achieve control. Jekyll develops a paranoid consciousness. He begins here to refer not only to Hyde but to 'Jekyll' objectively. The split is incomplete, the narrative 'I' dissociates itself from both the good and the bad identity. The division is unsuccessful because it is impossible and paradoxical, because it represents a crystallizing-out of his original dread.

Jekyll's account informs us that he had the mirror moved into his room for some specific purpose. A suggestion of what this may be is found in the occasion of his first glimpse of himself after taking the drug. He examines the change that has taken place in him. The recognition of himself in the mirror evokes a satisfied reaction similar to that induced following the first internally experienced transformation into Hyde. After the drug he feels 'younger, lighter, happier in body...an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul'. Again on perceiving his reflection there is a similar dissolution of anxiety;

And yet when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather a leap of welcome. This too, was

myself. It seemed natural and human. In my eyes it bore a livelier image of the spirit, it seemed more express and single, than the imperfect and divided countenance, I had hitherto accustomed to call mine (84-5).

At first the vision of himself/his shadow in the glass produces a beneficial effect. He believes that he is completely insulated from the repercussions of Hyde's behaviour, 'whatever he had done, Edward Hyde would pass away like the stain of breath upon a mirror' (86). However, when Jekyll loses control over the existence of Hyde, realizing that Hyde has an independent reality such that he is no longer subject to Jekyll's will, the reflection begins to create terror in the observer;

I rushed to the mirror. At the sight that met my eyes, my blood was changed into something exquisitely thin and icy. Yes, I had gone to bed Jekyll, I had awakened Edward Hyde...(88).

From then on Jekyll regards Hyde with fear and aggression. He develops a paranoid relationship to his mirror image, his own body; Hyde changes from sinner to devil. Jekyll's narrative concludes with what he fears to be Hyde's claim to complete dominion over his body, and his own consequent suicide. Splitting as a mode of control comes full circle. Complete unity is dependent upon the elimination, the absolute negation of both.

Plotting the Diabolical: The Text

The text of Jekyll's 'memoirs', to an extent, creates the paranoid writing/reading conditions developed in Poe's *Fym*. There is, attendant upon the usurpation of the body, anxiety as to whom the 'hand of write' belongs. Madness, delusion, delirium (the 'anti-Jekyll', the other, the 'trace') threaten to break in upon the *authority* of the text. In each of these texts an authorial split has enabled the writing of the text. The text frames, gives body, unity to the subject of the 'memoir'. The bible,

representative of the ultimate author(ity) is ritually defaced by both Gil-Martin in Hogg's *Confessions* and Hyde ('Utterson was amazed to find...a copy of a pious work for which Jekyll had several times expressed a great esteem, annotated, in his own hand, with startling blasphemies'; 'Hence the ape-like tricks that he would play me, scrawling in my own hand blasphemies on the pages of my books', 71 and 96). Wringhim had wanted to be inscribed in the eternal book, he is shown its lack of permanence and inviolability. Hyde threatens to break through into Jekyll's text, 'Should the throes of change take me in the act of writing it, Hyde will tear it in pieces' (97).

Dr. Jekyll's narrative hardly goes further than Lanyon's in achieving an approximation to the ineffable truth about Jekyll's de(con)struction. As Jekyll tells us, he can only supply us with a limited amount of information 'My narrative will make, alas! too evident, my discoveries were incomplete' (83). The 'version book' discovered by Lanyon in Jekyll's laboratory seems to foreshadow the pattern of his narrative; this contained only 'a series of dates'. These covered 'a period of many years', but he observed that 'the entries ceased nearly a year ago and quite abruptly'.

Here and there a brief remark was appended to a date, usually no more than a single word: 'double' occurring perhaps six times in a total of seven hundred entries; and once very early in the list and followed by several marks of exclamation, 'total failure!!!'. All this, though it whetted my curiosity, told me little that was definite...(76).

Although the terrible truth proves to be finally incommunicable and incomplete, the text signals various interpretative strategies that might render it accessible or offer a solution. Both Mr. Utterson and Dr. Lanyon operate under the seal of their professions, law and science. These professions are founded apparently upon logical and objective principles.

Dr. Jekyll's experience (in fact, who he is, has come to be, the denotation of his 'I') becomes accessible to these discourses on condition that it remain 'sealed' within either of them. Utterson reads the narratives of Lanyon and Jekyll in his capacity as Jekyll's lawyer. Jekyll allows Lanyon to witness his transformation 'under the seal of your profession' (80). Jekyll calls his narrative a *confession* (72). A confession may be of social crime or religious sin. He addresses his confession to Utterson, but it is unclear in what capacity Utterson is required to respond. Their discourse cannot 'seal' or contain Jekyll's subjective narrative. It is a thing apart, split off, beyond their scope. The narratives of Utterson and Lanyon are as 'other' to Jekyll's demoniacal confession as Jekyll is to Hyde.

The tale operates in reference to a further metatextual framework — the theory introduced by Darwin that man is descended from the ape. Hyde is repeatedly represented as a monkey-like figure given to animal desire and ferocity. Darwinism has been considered a parallel to the paranoid's system, as a cultural delusional theory;

the Darwinian integrative principle itself is viewed as important because it is integrative, and we do not mind too much the obvious fact that it is itself not empirically testable (Fried and Agassi 1976, 41).

Jekyll's drug achieves the validation of this 'truth'. Jekyll fears that he has a dual personality, one part of which is inhuman and amoral.

Darwinism provides a rationale for this belief, the other appearing as an ape (man's primeval core) instead of the devil (as the Christian framework might suggest). Within the spreading paranoid network of Jekyll's thinking, the drug, like Schreber's 'nerves' theory, is the key to stabilization. Jekyll needs to *connect* a historical theory with a psychological one. The

one thing that he and Hyde have in common is memory (89). The ape lives on in the 'unconscious' mind, in the soul of man. Jekyll, as if he were the first psychoanalyst, combines the metaphysical with the scientific, 'the situation was apart from ordinary laws' (87). The drug represents a paralogical attempt to subdue the other, the supernatural and irrational. It is the tool of a delusional operation fighting to integrate subjective disorder into the wholeness of scientific 'truth';

And it chanced that the direction of my scientific studies, which led wholly towards the mystic and the transcendental, reacted and shed a strong light on this consciousness of the perennial war among my members. With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to the truth by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck...' (84)

Jekyll sees his inner contradictions mirrored in the development of his scientific studies, and resolved within its framework into separate and discrete parts. It is (in contrast to the occasion of Wringham's possession) beyond doubt that the transformation of Jekyll into Hyde is a physical actuality (Lanyon witnesses the change Jekyll describes as taking place before him in a mirror), and is therefore supposedly scientifically or empirically determined. John Herdman, in *The Double in Nineteenth Century Fiction*, decides that this rationale for Jekyll's doubling is the main weakness of the tale;

The trouble is...that the story's crude scientism no longer gives it any such hold, that it appears to the modern reader to be indeed nothing more than a 'mystic spell', and in that respect the device renders the story very dated. The problem for a late nineteenth century writer such as Stevenson was that the loss of confident belief in any spiritual reality outside the human psyche had robbed him of a concrete figure through which to articulate the psychological-spiritual nuances to which he aspired to give form (1990, 132).

Conversely, it might also be seen, on a textual level, as its most effective device. It is not clear why the 'modern reader' should be

distinguishable from the late nineteenth century reader as regards the measure of discomfort elicited by a story which turns upon the hub of a 'mystic spell'. Indeed, Herdman fails in this way to account for its abiding fascination. There is, perhaps, a difficulty in seeing the empirical and the metaphysical combined in this manner. The reader, as the writer, is left 'robbed'. This kind of dualism reenacts, in a sense, that within the text expressed by Jekyll's attempt to separate off his grosser material self from his finer spiritual self. A rationale must be found, on the level of allegory, or the renewal of signification through reconstructing the text (as Jekyll attempts to integrate his radically divided self) in terms of an undisclosed metatextual symbolic system. Hypothesis (whether religious, evolutionist, psychoanalytical) inhabits the rift, is evoked to conjure the tale into profound significance, to freight the cipher of the drug. As the transformation (in contrast to the nature of Jekyll's initial sensation of discontinuity) is represented as physical rather than psychological it remains conceptually opaque and functions in a manner equivalent to the cheval glass into which Poole and Utterson gaze at the scene of the 'crime', as an irritant and provocation.

Like the editor's interpretation of Pym's tale, Jekyll's confession simply returns to the oppositions at play throughout the text; good/bad, black/white. Between the close of Jekyll's narrative ('I bring the life of that unhappy Jekyll to an end'), and Utterson's discovery of Hyde's body, Hyde has inexplicably reappeared and Jekyll has vanished. This transformation has taken place simultaneously with the transition from life to death of the body, and at this point the natural and the supernatural become contiguous. Where Jekyll's drug has by narrative sleight of hand achieved the collapsing of boundaries between the physical

and the moral or psychological, bringing the latter under the control of the former, this conclusion secures a reversal, a reinstatement of the original 'order' (denied by Lanyon, whose view-point Jekyll describes as narrow and material). The supernatural dimension of the tale remains unarticulated or only hinted at by Utterson, Lanyon and Jekyll, but is nevertheless fully present and cannot be excised. On Jekyll's suicide the relations between good and evil, self and other, life and death once more transcend the domain of science and knowledge; the epistemological aporia that provoked Jekyll (the conflict between the physical and the spiritual dimensions) is reinstituted. The glass returns only the reflections of the gazers' faces, instead of the resolution of the mystery of his fate. Jekyll's narrative offers the investigators (the lawyer, the police officer, the detective, the author, the reader, the psychoanalytical critic) no answer but the reflection of their own conflicted subjectivities, the always unsolved enigma of the self. The text releases Jekyll's spiritual/scientific hypothesizing, with no possibility of allaying the malignant demon that has brought about an inquiry into 'God's' laws or the order of things.

CONCLUSION: PROVOCATIVE NARRATIVES AND THE PARANOID TEXT

Perhaps the most well-known paranoid text would be Henry James's 'The Turn of the Screw'. Its acclaim and notoriety are such that the work needs no introduction; the amount of ink spilt puzzling over its piquant prevarications leaves little room for further speculation. It offers, in view of its reception, a powerful example of the paranoid dynamic. The predicament created in the text is of a familiarly perilous kind; either the narratee (of which several mediatory forms are generated) has been erroneously negotiating the headlong meanderings of insanity in the expectation that events would finally be secured in a customary 'reality', or he or she must succumb to an endless reconstruction of the sequence of events on a basis that both incorporates the supernatural and elaborates the precise nature of the perceived evil. Remarking upon the network of critical responses which have accumulated around this text, Christine Brooke-Rose notes that 'the hesitation of the reader' is encoded in the ambiguity of the text 'so efficiently that it has continued for three quarters of a century, building itself up into a literary 'case'' (1981, 128). The frequency of those treatments has, in its turn, become an object of interrogation; many have, already, been comprehensively charted both by Brooke-Rose and by Shoshanna Felman in *Writing and Madness*. 'The Turn of the Screw' displays perhaps the most complex and sophisticated (and playful) deployment of those strategies so far identified in the earlier texts; on this level it has proved enticingly accessible to approaches that attempt to apply psychoanalytical thought systems to its byzantine procedure. Felman points out that,

the hypothesis of madness, or 'pathology' which is indeed brought up

by the governess herself, is not nearly so easy to eliminate as one may think, since, expelled from the text, it seems to fall back on the text's interpreter, and thus ironically becomes, through the very critical attempt at its elimination, ineradicable from the critical vocabulary, be it that of the 'Freudians' or that of the 'metaphysicians' (1985, 147).

The presentation of madness in James's work ensures that, as Brooke-Rose says, 'the state of the governess is contagious' (1981, 132).

This kind of text seems to function as a mirror (recalling a recurrent motif of these Gothic presentations of madness) in relation to the invoked reader, who confronts in its elliptical surface both the mind's inherent resources for engaging in compulsive speculation, and the proximity of these resources to (and conversely their operation as modes of defense against) that state of delusion known as 'madness'.

George E. Haggerty has said of 'The Turn of the Screw' that it confronts us with,

our own inability to explain, or explain away, the Gothic experience. The degree to which we push for a resolution to this confusion, the very degree to which we desire that resolution still, is the degree to which we are part of the horror of the tale...all the details of our experience of the tale are but the bait for the epistemological crisis that we experience as the ultimate horror of this tale (1989, 157)

The study of the nineteenth century works in Part I has worked toward uncovering the narrative strategies that create this kind of jeopardy or 'critical' participation. These strategies have been examined for the ways in which they compel an osmosis from presented psychotic experience through a membrane of the narrative framing of that material and the text, into the process of reading. Each of these works, in some way, exhibits what appear to be three essential components: the text presents extraordinary psychic experience displaying features analogous to paranoid thought processes; this is associated both with madness and the

supernatural giving rise to a process of investigation of this phenomenon which is simultaneously located within conflicting conceptual frames, and which itself mimics these processes; resolution is both continuously offered and indefinitely deferred – characteristically the text not only resists closure but propels the reader back into the text promoting a compulsive re-reading the nature of which shifts ever closer to that of the primary fictional presentation of paranoid logic. This pervasive, circuitous paranoid logic is distinctive for the binary, polarized discursive configurations that generates it/it generates. On the level of subjective experience (that of a central protagonist) this can result in the splitting of the self into self and 'other', the parts of which develop continuity with such dualisms as become generally operational in the text; sane/insane, damned/saved, real/unreal, natural/supernatural, or good/evil. The operation of this kind of logic is usually precipitated by a rift, an enigma of some sort, an irresolvable mystery or 'disturbance of the order-of the-world' which requires an exaggerated realignment of these fundamental meaning-making oppositions in order to achieve resolution. Once the mechanism has been provoked, however, its inductive dynamic may carry the subject who identifies the need to reconcile untractable experience within the limits of the positive term over into the realms of the opposite term; the insane, the unreal, the supernatural.

The narratives operate in a manner which stresses the expectation of solution and completion. Nevertheless, each of the works ends with a renewal of mystery. There is an approach to revelation and solution and then enigma reinhabits the closure of the text. This denial of closure is the characteristic of these texts that has recently attracted most critical interest. They are treated as examples of post-structuralist theory. They

encourage such descriptions as a 'graphic illustration of the Derridean gospel'. Magdelene Redekop notes that 'closure is emerging as perhaps the single most important problem for critics of *A Justified Sinner*' (1985, 160), that 'inconclusive conclusions have become a prominent feature of contemporary reading of this book' (1985, 162) and clinches the point with a neat chiasmus 'Hogg has created an important new expectation: that all our expectations for rational order will be frustrated' (ibid., 178). *Pym* is often viewed (as are other of Poe's works) as a self-conscious comment upon the impossibility of meaning and presence in a deconstructive context. It is narrative which talks about itself. Paul Rosenzweig discusses the 'dust of disintegrating meaning' and explains that 'Nothing is certain in the world of the *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, not even the certainty that nothing is' (Rosenzweig 1984, 149). The uncertainty within the text becomes an uncertainty of the text. Yet the texts do not 'end' with non-closure, with an (*avant-garde*) subversive statement, turning our unreasonable (irrational, deluded) demands for signification back upon ourselves. At least this is not the whole story. They do not just bring about a disintegration of meaning and a sense of the indeterminacy of the literary text — should it be searched *ad infinitum* for clues. It is not the denial, but *the denial of denial* that is the salient feature.

Hogg sends the reader back into the text and to the grave of the suicide (with some urgency, for soon there will be nothing left of the body), in the hope that the significance of Wringhim's narrative (the reason for its preservation) will be unearthed. Where Wringhim's text had failed to supply the 'Editor' with any peace of mind concerning what 'actually' happened, he went beyond it to the evidence contained in the grave of a dead man whose flesh was unaccountably undecayed. Death has

not happened, closure has not happened, the body is somehow unnaturally still living, and equally unnaturally, the text continues to be written.

Part of Pym's narrative is missing *but may still be found*.

It is feared that the few remaining chapters which were to have completed his narrative, and which were retained by him, while the above were in type, for the purpose of revision, have been irrecoverably lost through the accident by which he perished himself. This however, may not prove to be the case, and the papers, if ultimately found, will be given to the public (Poe 1975, 240).

Again, further investigation is suggested:

The loss of the two or three final chapters (for there were but two or three) is the more deeply to be regretted, as, it cannot be doubted, they contained matter relative to the Pole itself, or at least to regions in its very near proximity; and as, too, the statements of the author in relation to these regions may shortly be verified or contradicted by means of the governmental expedition now preparing for the Southern Ocean' (ibid., 240).

The key to the tale is missing, but it is not so much lost as concealed.

It is, perhaps, significant that Poe was himself interested not so much in expressing what amounts to the perpetual play of signification in language, and the way in the sign itself is empty of presence and meaning, but in eliciting the intellectual process which *insists upon its significance*². Hence his fascination for hieroglyphs and cryptography as evidenced in his essays entitled 'Secret Writing'³, where he explores the 'peculiar mental action' that is 'called into play in the solution of cryptographical problems' (Harrison 1965, 123);

Cryptography,...pure, properly embraces those modes of writing which are rendered legible only by means of some explanatory key which makes known the real signification of the ciphers employed to its possessor...Nonsensical phrases and unmeaning combinations of words, as the learned lexicographer would have confessed himself, when hidden under cryptographic ciphers, serve to *perplex* the curious enquirer, and baffle penetration more completely than would the most profound *apothegms* of learned philosophers (Harrison 1965, 126-127).

Poe's text itself stimulated the writing of several elaborate responses, from authors⁴ who attempted to complete and explain the story in rational

terms, to decipher the text.

These texts are 'not finished', but they are incomplete not only in the sense that completion is impossible, but in the sense that hypothesizing and interpretation is invited to continue beyond the scope of the text, beyond the ceasing of the narrative. Their deconstructive quality leads immediately into a reconstructive mode (but not necessarily of the kind that Todorov proposes, that is to say the resolution either in terms of the 'uncanny' or the 'marvellous').

The plot of each of these works involves the unravelling of where madness ends and the supernatural begins, where the parameters of reality in the fictional world coincide with those of the actual 'known' world. The supernatural, the inexplicable, is an irritant; it is un-whole-some, it points to the breach where God used to be, the subject and his world are not whole, boundaries are transgressed and broken. These works' initial appeal to their audience is made on a rational and empiric level. As Hogg's editor challengingly remarks of the appearance of the supernatural (having asserted the coherence of the justified sinner's narrative with that of popular tradition) 'it could scarcely have missed to have been received as authentic; but in this day, and with the present generation, it will not go down...' (1969, 254). The objectivity displayed in the texts is betrayed. Their reception may elicit one of two equally destabilizing responses; either a subjection to a code which will encompass the operation of the supernatural (belief in the devil, belief in a threatening, concealed and monstrous part of ourselves, belief in the eradication of the boundaries between the known world and the esoteric at the ends of the earth - therefore not 'the marvellous' resolution of Todorov) *despite* the appeal to a wholesome rationality; or the recognition that the process of

unpacking the text the reader has also been exposed to and infected by a paranoid hypothesizing around a delusional centre: 'reading about psychosis becomes a reading psychosis'²⁵. The rational, empirical subject is hung by the locks (like Robert Wringhim, in his hallucinatory experience) over the perilous, yawning chasm of madness, the supernatural, the incognizable, and is forced to *account for* what happens, is 'hoist with his own petard'.

The urgency evoked to discover a pattern in the texts is of a paranoid nature. Criticism that discovers the pattern of the texts to be one of an allegory of the process of writing, of signification are nevertheless in a sense succumbing to this factor. In the same way the 'editor' of Pym's narrative offers the 'explanation' of the hieroglyphs. The texts operate upon the reader in a manner that produces results similar to Schreber's compulsion to complete partial sentences that form in his mind. In Schreber's writing (for the purposes of this discussion at least) his pathology may be seen to reside in a persistent attempt to make sense where sense is missing. There is a predominant interpretative activity operating where interpretation is impossible. Madness is found where reason is forced to rationalize that which is suspected of being beyond the conventional universe of discourse.

The splitting and antithesis that takes place in these texts, including Schreber's, and manifested in what may be considered a pathological mode in the form of doubles and delusions, appears fundamentally to be an attempt to create meaning and whole-someness through objectification. This is triggered when some subversion of the normal order of things, experienced subjectively as an enigma, occurs. The dissociation in the case of Schreber, however, functions finally in a manner distinguishable from the fictional modes. Through the construction

of his comprehensive and elaborate cosmic system Schreber begins to regain some kind of stability, the psychological disruption he has been experiencing becomes more harmless, 'the scales of victory are coming down on my side more and more, the struggle against me continues to lose its previous hostile character...' (Schreber 1988, 214). His logical self has created a framework within which his irrational experience becomes rational and explicable, and he is therefore (despite God's plan) able to fend off total dementia and suicide. Each of the fictional texts, however, end with death; or rather, deferred deaths, that precede and undercut the final destruction of the central protagonist, the circumstances of which merely create more mystery. Poe's ratiocination works on the surface to expunge the presence of mystery with regard to Pym's consciousness rather than to integrate it into his reality. The overall effect is, however, vertiginous. Objectivizing, rational hyper-activity very often leads into frustration.

Purposive ambiguity and lack of clarity in Hogg infuriated a contemporary reviewer;

If an author will introduce supernatural beings, he is at least bound to invent plausible motives for their interference in human concerns...The phantoms of that superstition must either have a real, external being; or they must exist solely in the diseased imagination of the supposed writer...(1969, 257, appendix).

This is exactly the differentiation that Schreber works so hard to make. These texts cultivate ontological anxiety, and thereby induce a paranoid reading-effect. Through their continuous emphasis upon tracing a thread through the labyrinth of cause and effect, upon the mechanisms of meaning production, upon the construction of plot and through their ambiguous presentation of madness and the supernatural they challenge, in effect, the 're-plotting' of a world within which such texts may be accommodated and

resolved; the moment of hesitation identified by Todorov is constitutive and indefinite. The provocation to resolve is there, and for reasons which would seem in fact to refute his suggestion that they have little to do with the 'psychology of reading'. Paranoia, within the context of the Gothic fictional mode, would appear to be identifiable as a 'malady of reading', and is brought into play at that point at which the distinction between fiction as depiction of the 'unreal' and as engulfment in delusion is most strenuously plied⁵.

PART II: SCHIZOID FICTION

INTRODUCTION: MADNESS AND MODERN FICTION

This section will deal with texts bearing some similarity to those discussed in relation to the 'paranoid', but which develop aspects that seem to require a different approach. The designation of these texts as 'modern' does not necessarily imply that they were written within a specific historical period. The term is used to indicate a type of text that displays an approach to 'madness' that ceases to function in accord with what are now generally considered outmoded ideas; that is to say, it is treated in a way which does not invoke superstitious responses, does not align insanity with — or play it off against — the supernatural, and which does not demonstrate an overt interrogative narrative concern with metaphysical oppositions.

I will be looking at works that deal with what appears to be, and has frequently been approached as, the breakdown of the mentality of a central character into a form of psychosis. Manifestations of derangement may or may not be discussed as such within the text by the narrator. The process of increasing psychic destabilization itself (rather than conjecture as to the status of 'mad' experience) provides the texts with a kind of unifying structural dynamic. In contrast to the 'paranoid' texts discussed, the experience of the 'mad' self in these texts remains unmediated by any determined rational interpretative and controlling mechanism or voice; or rather, if it appears, this voice may become demonstrably defeated or obsolete. The narrative may swing from a 'control' position to one of passive endorsement of the position taken up by (or imposed upon) the psychotic self.

The ambivalence created in the texts previously examined in terms of

Todorov's ideas (which gave them a paranoid character) no longer appears to be an important element of the narrative. They do not belong to the genre of the 'fantastic'. The texts to be dealt with here unambiguously present as their subject a form of insanity. Neither are they strictly conformable to Todorov's idea of the literary Gothic (as the others may be)'. Little doubt is allowed to remain in these texts as to whether any event is brought about by the operation of the supernatural. A disturbance is never finally locatable in the 'outside' objective world, its source lies on the 'inside', within the individual concerned. Its 'naturalness' (the possibility of its coming about within the laws of nature as they are generally understood) is not the focus of interrogation by narrator or reader.

The stories do coincide to a certain extent, however, with Todorov's general idea of the genre of the 'uncanny' in its 'pure state':

In works that belong to this genre, events are related which may be readily accounted for by the laws of reason, but which are, in one way or another, incredible, extraordinary, shocking, singular, disturbing or unexpected (1975, 46).

In so far as madness may be accounted for by the laws of reason (and moving into the twentieth century there are available to author and reader proliferating methods for doing so — springing from the growth of psychiatry and psychoanalysis) these texts may be considered uncanny. However, they may also be found to question the adequacy of an appeal to 'the laws of reason' and nature to account for the events; not because reason cannot account for something supernatural, but because reason paradoxically is what stands between the psychotic experience and an understanding of it. Reason is that which preserves the 'uncanniness' of such experience through a form of distancing. The disturbing effects of

these works may depend upon the breaking down of those distancing mechanisms.

The narratives do not finally work toward, or conclude with, an inducement to paranoid interpretative strategies (with regard to the presence of the irrational within it) – although such expectations may be aroused at the outset. Instead, what can only be described in each case as a statement of negation or refusal of such interpretation occurs. The irrational forfeits its status as 'other' through the lack of differentiation on the level of narrative logic. There is little incitement to identify and defeat a disruption of 'order' – the process which would engender narrative activity. Disorder finds its own validation as a facet of human experience and becomes integral to the narrative voice.

Approached as the structurally significant component of a literary text rather than as a clinically conceived exposition, this refusal may be concerned with protest against or protection from various forms of negatively experienced management; a character may be understood to be reacting against reduction, against understanding or being understood, or against being open to a repressive circumscription of the self within a (socially, discursively) prescribed and defined existence. The stories may be interpreted as structured around the presentation of the individual encountering conflict between the self and a world which it experiences as repressive. Any textual resolution which allows dismissal of this experience to occur through the application of the critical adjective 'mad' is in this regard a false restabilization, a concealment of the original state of conflict. The presentation of a psychotic state of mind is in each case of a kind liable to undermine paranoid, exegetical activity. It represents a partial dissociation or dislocation from a dominant discursive

reality as represented by an objective interpretative narrative consciousness.

Essentially the point I wish to make in juxtaposing readings of these with the other more 'fantastic' texts is that instead of enacting and instituting a search for meaning (in a manner which becomes psychotic by virtue of its being applied to that which insistently eludes satisfactory rationalization), they seem to enlist 'madness' in a gesture against such a process. Instead of any persistent movement toward a (manifestly unattainable) restabilization of self and meaning these texts focus upon the instability of the self and begin to question the constructed nature of meaning. The activity of decision and explanation is precluded by attention being focussed in a subjective experience of madness — of an 'anti-logical' as opposed to a paralogical² kind). A position of objective judgement ('is this in accord with rational or natural laws and if not how can I make it so?') becomes less tenable.

Before examining these aspects of the transformation in presentation of disturbed states of consciousness in fiction, the fact that this shift does not take place within a conceptual vacuum should be addressed. It has often been remarked that much twentieth century narrative fiction seems to have been increasingly preoccupied with such states. Bernard McElroy, for example, takes note of 'the technique of a conspicuous number of twentieth century writers by which the reins of a novel are delivered into the hands of a first person narrator who is insane or quite possibly insane, thereby making the world of the novel the world as he experiences it' (1989, 95). The proliferation of discourses around the phenomenon of 'insanity' since the pioneering work of Freud has led to a universally heightened awareness of its manifestations and of the ways in which they

may be described. Some texts previously examined predate, and yet prefigure concerns which become the focus of later twentieth century theoretical and scientific debate (see appendix for further general discussion concerning relevant developments). I do not assume any direct connection between particular fictional and clinical approaches to madness, beyond the recognition that there exists an interface where both are reliant upon the limited power of contemporary discursive structures to communicate the states of consciousness. Characteristic similarities are typologically noted.

Madness, understood as psychological disturbance whether the cause is traced to mental or biological dysfunction, may now be known by many names and explained in as many different contexts. Common to most is the idea that it is dysfunction, that it is an illness consequently capable of cure by science. There is an inherent paradox however, that arises out of the discourses created to secure this perspective upon madness, which posits insanity as both ultimately natural and controllable. Once madness is made to render up its threatening, enigmatic status and to submit to the clinical gaze, it also gives up its position as 'other', as linked to the supernatural, as always beyond and external to the 'rational' self and, in its naturalness enters into that self - it is no longer alien to the norm but intrinsic to the norm. As an illness it is perhaps unhealthy but not unnatural or even irrational.

In the gothic text, madness maintains sufficient of its enigmatic status to perform as a challenge to rational or scientific discourse, to the coherence of the text. Where the scientific or rational approach fails, God and the metaphysical returns in daemonized form, eliciting the compulsion to contain this return within the protagonist's mind. Much of

the textual power of madness lies in the never wholly excluded possibility that its origin is supernatural rather than psychological. Daemonic persecution, the wrath of God or the evil of the Devil *may* be located in the fevered imaginings of the mad protagonist, or may signal the eruption of a forgotten other world into the world of the text, which masquerades as a reflection of contemporary reality. Though there is uncertainty as to whether it is inside or outside, that opposition is still very much operative. In twentieth century clinical thought it begins to be broken down. Rather than residing between the natural and the supernatural, the origin of the disturbance has been located (leaving aside biological and neurological theories) in several primary conceptual sites: the faulty progression of the individual from infancy to sexual maturity (the narrative of sexual orientation), the critical relation of the subject to language and of the individual to society. In each case insanity may find its roots embedded, at the same moment as within the individual, in that space that we are challenged to preserve inviolate in earlier texts — the 'real' world, the environment in which the protagonist functions and which we share. These are unavoidably interconnected, but the degree of interrelation is dependent upon the emphasis of the theorist. Since Freud the self precariously inhabits, and has become inhabited by disorder and irrationality³.

Beyond any consensus suggested here as emergent from a constituent modern 'demystification' of madness, any designation of psychosis remains inherently unstable due to the plurality of available categories and the resistant fluidity of manifestations of psychic disturbance. The concept of 'schizophrenia' functions as an index to this seminal (but medically frustrating) permutability. It performs the transmutation of 'madness' into

something that may be subsumed within current diagnostic and descriptive discourses. These share with recent philosophical and literary theoretical debate the common focus of the operation of language (see also appendix, under 'Jacques Lacan and Language' and 'Further Linguistic Approaches' for further relevant discussion in this regard). In the domain of psychiatry the term can serve, fundamentally, to situate madness within a linguistic context, to make of it an object *identifiable* through its modes of expression whilst releasing it both from a redundant metaphysics and an uncertain physicality. Though it is so widely used, the term remains arguably only loosely descriptive, both within clinical usage and popular vocabulary. As is pointed out in *Schizophrenia: An Integrated Approach to Research and Treatment* (Birchwood 1988, 16), from its inception a century ago as a hypothetical concept 'schizophrenia was imbued with a sense of certainty, of a spurious foundation in a secure knowledge base' but has really become merely 'shortened for 'insanity''. There are 'no universally accepted criteria for the classification of schizophrenia' (ibid., 12). The *International Encyclopaedia of Psychiatry* reiterates this, 'schizophrenia is not a clinical entity but a group of distinct clinical patterns put together on the basis of a loose communality of symptoms' (ibid., 47). These 'patterns' seem to inform general critical use of the term. They are taken up in this study in so far as they are founded in, or may be related to the narrative use of language.

As is the case with paranoia, schizophrenia is a term that has passed into common parlance. It is frequently used to indicate inexplicably conflicting facets of personality or modes of behaviour evinced by an individual. This particular deployment of the adjective 'schizoid', implying as it does manifestations of multiple personality, is of limited benefit in

this case, where attention is paid to modes of narration (and not simply to the doubling or splitting of character). More appropriate, but disparate, are descriptions of 'schizoid thought processes' as manifest in speech or writing; they may be expected to be, for example, 'peculiarly fragmentary, disjointed, and discontinuous', according to the *International Encyclopaedia of Psychiatry*. They are commonly acknowledged to include an attendant sensation of 'loss of self' or of any 'psychical boundary'. Eugene Bleuler, providing one of the earliest and most influential accounts of schizophrenia, is still referred to for his classification, which stresses associative disturbances and affective incongruity as significant to the condition:

In associative disturbances the patient's thinking appears incomprehensible. He is no longer capable of linking his thought according to logical relationships, so thoughts are disconnected or unusually connected and lacking in rational structure (Balis 1978, 134).

In affective incongruity, he explains 'a feeling of indifference or an emotional bluntness may coexist' (ibid., 134). Bleuler posits here a state of normality where thought, feeling and speech operate logically and rationally in relation to each other — the disruption of which marks the schizophrenic subject. That recognition or establishment of difference and reversal ('no longer') allows for the identification of psychosis. Though specific interpretations differ, ultimately a consensus is apparent to the effect that schizoid states must reside in the disrupted relation of the self both to language and to reality.

That assumption of a babelish deterioration is the necessary basis here for the discrimination of sanity from insanity (necessary for those whose job it is to make such a decision). The fictionist, however, is able to elude the narrative logic of the fallen state, the 'no longer', the

movement into difference through time. C. G. Jung's listing of the potentially psychotic characteristics of modern art in 'Ulysses: A Monologue' (1934, in Jung 1967) both further demonstrates the original breadth of significance attributable to the concept of schizophrenia, and shows a psychiatrist wrestling with the problematic illusoriness of art for the diagnostician who is nevertheless provoked by the insights it seems to offer. He speaks of the incidence in Joyce's *Ulysses* of 'interminable ramblings', 'a sensory curiosity directed inwards as well as outwards', 'a delirious confusion of the subjective and psychic with objective reality', 'a method of presentation that takes no account of the reader but indulges in neologisms, fragmentary quotations, sound- and speech-associations, abrupt transitions and hiatuses of thought', 'an atrophy of feeling that does not shrink from any depth of absurdity or cynicism', and 'the tendency to treat reality as if it were strange'. The psychiatrist may find himself 'startled' by the suspicion that the book is 'schizophrenic', since trenchant analogies may be drawn (ibid., 116). He finds, however, that he is in a domain where he can identify no 'norm' from which the composition deviates (e.g. Joyce's style of writing when 'sane'?; Jung counters - 'It would never occur to me to class *Ulysses* as a product of schizophrenia', ibid. 117). He concludes that the text simply represents a facet of the norm, 'a collective manifestation of our time' (ibid., 117). We would not then be dealing with 'schizophrenic' as *diagnosis* ('knowing between', evaluative differentiation between past self and present, or the condition of one individual as opposed to that of the majority) but as a *description*: this would not necessarily imply any lapse, since it is not clear from what there has been a fall, and to whom/what this has happened. Jung's analysis infers that a schizoid configuration may be the property of the text, and

not of the writer's mind. It also indicates the extent to which diagnostic method, from the inception of 'schizophrenia' as a category, could be characterized by and lend itself to a textual, or narrative mode of comprehension.

The analysis of the modern texts will work toward evolving a perspective upon the possible usefulness of such a polysemous, over-determined but richly suggestive term for the activity of literary criticism (adapted here to 'schizoid' to free the term from its association with the mind of the 'patient'). It is possible that there can be no true schizoid 'text' in the sense of *the writings of a schizophrenic*; such experience would be unwritable because the linguistic and conceptual ordering principle is damaged. Schreber's system centred and 're-created' his subjectivity; the self is repaired as it becomes *narratable*. Schizoid states involve a 'non-'sense of self from which the act of writing affords no sustainable redemption, or may even be considered disruptive in itself. It may be said, however, that an analogous perplexity has in different ways become characteristic of many modern and 'post-modern' literary texts. Beckett's *The Unnamable*, for example, demonstrates an anarchic oscillation between liberation and entrapment contiguous with the radical ephemerality of the dis-articulated (unnameable, uncreated) schizoid self:

I'm all these words, all these strangers, this dust of words, with no ground for their settling, no sky for their dispersing, coming together to say, fleeing one another to say, that I am they, all of them, those that merge, those that part, those that never meet, and nothing else, yes, something else, that I'm quite different, a quite different thing, a wordless thing in an empty place, a hard shut dry cold black place, where nothing stirs, nothing speaks, and that I listen, and that I seek, like a caged beast born of caged beasts born of caged beasts...blind from birth (1979, 356).

Is the 'I' misrepresented or negated by language ('I'm quite different'), or nothing other than — fall-out from — language ('this dust of words'?).

Julia Kristeva has suggested that some recent works are, in a sense 'unreadable' (Kristeva 1986, 42) (if not, manifestly, unwritable), and there is much to be said on this level. However, this discussion will confine itself to texts that refer specifically to psychic disturbance⁴. The wider relevance of the arguments put forward may be inferred from the treatment here of writers that are considered to be representative of modern and 'post-'modern literature.

DE-COMPOSITION IN MELVILLE'S 'BARTLEBY THE SCRIVENER: A STORY
OF WALL-STREET'

Narrative Structure: Story-Telling Against the Grain

Whilst manifesting similarities in its treatment of disturbed states of consciousness with the works formerly under discussion, this story also marks a departure and prefigures many of the concerns to be developed in later fictional treatments of madness. In particular, it demonstrates a move toward representing psychosis in a way which more plainly addresses the individual's modes of psychic defence against the alienation or 'falsification' of the self within modern social structures; although it was published first in 1853, this is an approach which aligns it with mid-twentieth century rather than contemporary attitudes.

The arrival of Bartleby in the narrator's law office, apparently in answer to an advertisement for a scrivener, initiates the account. The text follows the progress of the relationship between the two men. It is a history of the increasingly irrational behaviour of one man, and of the other's reasonable (he believes) response to this behaviour. The fact that it becomes, ultimately, not a simple matter to discern whose behaviour is to be considered the more rational indicates some of the complexity of this narrative.

Bartleby seems, at first, to be the ideal copyist, working obsessively for long hours. However, the narrator begins to express his perplexity as the scrivener refuses to carry out aspects of his work, and finally refuses to do anything at all. Having allowed him to remain

motionless in this way, day and night for some time (Bartleby has taken up lodgings in his office), the narrator decides that his new scrivener should go. Bartleby, however, unexpectedly refuses to go. By this time the narrator begins to find Bartleby's presence insupportable and decides to move out himself. Following this Bartleby is sent to prison by the new landlord of the previous premises, and eventually dies incarcerated.

The text bears some compositional resemblance to Hogg's *Sinner*. Like the Editor, the narrator in this story begins by establishing his authority, an authority that derives from an acceptable and accessible social position. He describes himself as a 'safe man'. This is a term which has significance within the context of his professional occupation on Wall Street, and also suggests that as a narrator he is reliable, operating with reason and discretion. From his position of security he sets out to narrate the history of the scrivener, a character that he has come to regard as in some manner insane.

The world of the text is limited to a specific and unified space. The narrator proposes that, by initiating his tale with a description of the environment, and of the way people function and behave within it, a complete understanding of Bartleby might be achieved:

Ere introducing the scrivener, as he first appeared to me, it is fit I make some mention of myself, my *employés*, my business, my chambers, and general surroundings; because some such description is indispensable to an adequate understanding of the chief character about to be presented (Melville 1967, 59).

The implied author is a typical inhabitant of this environment. He is a lawyer of an unexceptional kind ('I am one of those unambitious lawyers...', 60). Within such offices, according to the narrator's experience, there exist two kinds of men; lawyers, and law-copyists, or 'scriveners'. This story is then comprised in the experience of two people, lawyer and law-

copyist, one who writes and one who copies, one who commands and one who obeys; one who has a voice, and one who does not. The narrator speaks for both; he feels that his own experience must also be able to account for Bartleby's, since they share a common circumstance.

However, the lawyer is really attempting to tell the story of a man he perceives to be suffering from an 'innate and incurable disorder' (79), which institutes difference. At first this disorder takes the form of exaggerated conformity:

Bartleby did an extraordinary quantity of writing. As if long famishing for something to copy, he seemed to gorge himself on my documents. There was no pause for digestion. He ran a day and night line, copying by sunlight and candlelight (67).

Initially, this is perceived as merely eccentric. The narrator describes the erratic personality traits of his other employees, which seem to be expressions of frustration with their occupation (for example he says of 'Nippers', who is continually frustrated with his equipment, 'if he wanted anything it was to be rid of a scrivener's table altogether' 64). Their peculiar and regulated outbursts appear to have developed as a kind of safety-valve. The lawyer talks about their aberrations coolly, with amused detachment (he is not eccentric), and congratulates himself upon how, despite these problems, he has still managed to find the men useful, and has been able to manipulate them into the schedule of his normal working day.

All that Bartleby does, however, is write, manifesting no intractable behavioural quirks. Yet it is in his excessive industry that his derangement first becomes apparent. The lawyer is anxious:

I should have been quite delighted with his application, had he been cheerfully industrious. But he wrote on silently, palely, mechanically (67).

His 'madness' manifests itself as a kind of 'scrivener's madness', a maniacal perversion of what is expected of him. Amidst this display of tangential human behaviour, the narrator presents himself as oddly self-contained. He is complacent in his acceptance of his way of life as natural and desirable, as a reasonable sort of existence. A precarious state of mind, he mentions, is a frequent occurrence in his profession, but he maintains himself as an exception to the rule;

Though I belong to a profession proverbially energetic and nervous, even to turbulence, at times, yet nothing of that sort have I ever suffered to invade my peace (59-60).

Bartleby, however, increasingly affects his peace of mind. Suddenly, instead of carrying out his tasks with quiet acumen and a defensive equanimity, he unaccountably refuses to carry them out at all. Having been asked by the lawyer to examine a paper, Bartleby, in a 'singularly mild, firm voice' replies, 'I would prefer not to'. The narrator confesses his panic:

I sat awhile in perfect silence, rallying my stunned faculties. Immediately it occurred to me that my ears had deceived me, or Bartleby had entirely misunderstood my meaning. I repeated my request in the clearest tone I could assume; but in quite as clear a voice came the previous reply, "I would prefer not to". "Prefer not to", echoed I, rising in high excitement, and crossing the room with a stride. "What do you mean? Are you moon-struck?" (68).

His incredulous fury arises from the perceived breach of a contract established between them. There is a sense in which his response is appropriate. Bartleby's reasonable tone suggests that the lawyer's request is itself unreasonable, and challenges the conventions of this existence. The narrator feels he must draw in other employees to witness Bartleby's odd behaviour;

It is not seldom the case that, when a man is browbeaten in some unprecedented and violently unreasonable way, he begins to stagger in his own plainest faith. He begins, as it were, vaguely to surmise that, wonderful as it may be, all the justice and all the reason is on

the other side. Accordingly, if any disinterested persons are present, he turns to them for some reinforcement of his own faltering mind (70).

It is from this moment that the narrator's stance of complete equilibrium becomes questionable. He is not as 'safe' as he imagines. It is possible to discern beneath the lawyer's veneer of *compos mentis* conduct a subtext of growing disorientation and increasingly paranoid behaviour'. Despite the fact that he regards Bartleby as a 'demented man' the lawyer *prefers* to retain him in the office; that is, until his presence becomes so embarrassing for his practice that he asks him to leave. He assumes that Bartleby will depart, and this he hopes (the conviction that he, as a reasonable being inhabits a reasonable world, is dependent upon Bartleby's compliance) should be enough to actually bring about his departure. The scrivener does not leave, and the lawyer conceives of a plan that might prove effective;

I might enter my office in a great hurry, and pretending not to see Bartleby at all, walk straight against him as if he were air. Such a proceeding would have the appearance of a home-thrust. It was hardly possible that Bartleby could withstand such an application of the doctrine of assumptions (86).

The 'doctrine of assumptions' turns out to be predictably ill-founded. Eventually, deciding paralogically that if his scrivener will not leave, his office will leave the scrivener, he moves his rooms to another part of Wall Street. The narrator, in relating the story of his encounter with Bartleby, explains but never comments upon the singularity of his own thought processes and behaviour. Yet he trembles to think that his 'contact with the scrivener had already and seriously affected [him] in a mental way' (81). He suspects that he is losing touch with his habitual modes of functioning in this society (the nodes of 'reality' which it is his role to maintain).

The narrator's rational tone and style, the manner in which he suggests he is telling the story of one of his scriveners and objectifies Bartleby's gradual psychic disintegration, overlays the more personal story of his own experience. In Melville's text there is another 'voice' operating below the superficial narration of events which suggests there is a different story being told. On this level the appearance of Bartleby is also the catalyst to the narrator's experience of an increasing subjective proximity to a state of insanity. Their confrontation is one which threatens to bring about a destabilization of the lawyer's psychological condition. The course of events which leads to Bartleby's removal from his presence is also that which ensures that the developing insecurity of narrative view-point does not finally result in a disruption of the text, and allows the story to be told objectively - in retrospect.

The narrator then, is not so 'safe' as first appears. His responses to Bartleby's behaviour are illogical and not entirely consistent with the *reasonable* tone that he adopts to tell his story. Bartleby's psychological state, and also that of the narrator, have been critically recognized as conforming to (diverse) clinically identified conditions². The relationship, on the narrative level, between the lawyer and his scrivener develops a complexity belied by the tone of the lawyer's introduction of the story. The objective presentation of another's psychological deterioration is undermined, the boundaries between them - from the narrator's perspective - are indistinct. As the narrative develops it becomes clear that this lack of an authentic perspective has influenced, conversely, the narrative presentation. The impact of Bartleby upon the narrator can be understood when it is considered to what extent the scrivener becomes a subversive factor in his life. Bartleby represents a threat to his personal vision of

the 'order of the world'. Order, in his offices, is his priority to the extent that the violent emotional outbursts of his most valuable copyists are viewed in the light of how he can integrate such irregularities into the smooth running of his practice. His existence is derived from, and consists in, the orderly transcription of legal language. He is by definition 'a conveyancer and title hunter, and drawer-up of recondite documents of all sorts' (66). He deals in the creation of order, of financial agreements and contracts. Bartleby's arrival shakes the foundations of this world, since he prefers not to adopt its internal logic and behavioural requirements, not to be 'automatized', to lose his self in this manner (nor to exhibit a suppressed resistance in the inconsistent manner of Turkey and Nippers). This kind of reasoning negates that upon which the narrator sustains his own 'safety'; anything other than working in an orderly fashion (worshipping 'prudence' and 'method') in a well-organized world denotes derangement. The narrator is caught in a difficult position. To dismiss Bartleby would be to admit the defeat of his methods of reasoning. To let him remain means that he is allowing, or inviting, the undermining of his authority and of the conventions of his way of life. Bartleby's rebellion is a threat to the lawyer's social identity. When the narrator discovers that Bartleby has come to *continuously* inhabit his office, and is even able to exclude the lawyer from the place in which he is 'safe', it is experienced by the narrator as 'unmanning' (76);

I consider that one, for the time, is sort of unmanned when he tranquilly permits his hired clerk to order him away from his own premises³.

At first the lawyer sees Bartleby's behaviour as the result of faulty

logic, and 'begins to reason with him' (70). The lawyer is then convinced that Bartleby must see reason behind his argument ('every copyist is bound to examine his copy', 70), and that if he appears not to, it must be because he has good reason, within the terms of this contract, to disagree;

It seemed to me that, while I had been addressing him, he carefully revolved every statement that I made; fully comprehended the meaning; could not gainsay the irresistible conclusion; but at the same time, some paramount consideration prevailed with him as he did (70).

When it becomes clear that no 'paramount consideration' is forthcoming the lawyer's faith in Bartleby's powers of comprehension fails and he considers him deranged. Bartleby has however already undermined the balance of his own thoughts. He cannot explain his response to Bartleby - his failure to dismiss him, his inability to cope with him, his own aggression and acute helplessness when confronted with Bartleby's misery and passivity. All attempts at dealing rationally with Bartleby as an employee have failed.

The lawyer's narrative (as an ordering process, a composition of cause and effect) displays paranoid characteristics⁴ in its treatment of Bartleby's 'madness'. As *author* of the story of Wall Street, of 'Bartleby', the narrator is in part defusing the threat of losing his own sense of self. He attempts to assume Bartleby into his narrative (by adopting him as his protégé, 'billeted upon him by providence', and by attempting to control Bartleby with his 'doctrine of assumptions'); he tries to take him up into his description of events, into his own account of Bartleby's personality. Bartleby 'interested' him most because he was 'one of those beings of whom nothing is ascertainable' (59). It has become *essential* to ascertain something about him, in order to right the subverted order of the lawyer's world and to preserve his own sanity. The writing of Bartleby may be seen as a paranoid mechanism enlisted to reconstruct his

world. He sees the lack of information about Bartleby as an 'irreparable loss to literature' (59); fictionalizing Bartleby prevents further rupture in the texture of his existence. As narrator he sets out to repair this loss of coherence, and the task is a challenging one. He asserts that he could write the *complete* biography of other men, but Bartleby apparently has none. Bartleby both undermines the ascendancy of an objective viewpoint, and offers the opportunity for total mastery. When his life history is demanded of him by the lawyer, as a final test of his ability to be 'reasonable', he will submit nothing;

"Will you tell me, Bartleby, where you were born?"

"I would prefer not to."

"Will you tell me anything about yourself?"

"I would prefer not to" (80).

The narrator, by nevertheless endowing himself with the legitimacy of the authorial voice, has discovered (he hopes) a way of assuring that the 'I' that assumes is safe, victorious in 'assuming' the former into his narrative. He draws up the document; but his safety is not assured, Bartleby's silence forever threatens and withholds confirmation of that reality. This 'virtual' control over the subject of his narrative is important with regard to the way in which this text's treatment of disturbed states of consciousness differs from the type of text previously discussed. Here the emphasis is not so much upon challenging logical and objective modes of reading the world, as it is concerned with the difficulty of locating a fixed and unassailable subject position as the locus of thought and action. The narrator decides that the relation of conflict that arises between himself and Bartleby rests essentially in their different use of words. It becomes apparent that what is at stake is not simply the opposition of perversity to reason, of deviance to the

norm, but a struggle enacted on a linguistic level for sovereignty of the sign; for the preservation of psychic stability through the right to exercise self-expression in language.

Truth is, in this context, not transcendent but recognized to be constituted in the process of negotiating consensus. The lawyer assumes that his truth has priority because it is underwritten by social structures. The tool he uses for the creation of order, legal discourse, is one of pedantic linguistic precision. In his encounter with Bartleby it becomes clear that once the social contract is challenged all that remains of his logic is assumption; though it is usually coercive because effectively disguised by the hierarchical configurations which situate the individual either as employer or employee, as legislator or subject, Bartleby has exposed that system as a fiction. If Bartleby does not agree that he is 'bound' to examine his copy, he goes not against reason but against assumption.

The manner in which Bartleby engages in the use of language is both alienated and alienating. His utterances are ineffectual. He lacks an 'I' that describes himself. His existence, circumscribed by Wall Street, by the lawyer's chambers, is an existence without a self. The lawyer writes up documents, agreements, statements and verbally orchestrates the activities in his office; he exercises language. Bartleby's function is to copy these documents, to wordlessly respond. Drawing on the ideas of Benveniste, Bartleby's ultimate breakdown may be understood as a crisis in subjectivity brought about by his relation to language:

It is in and through language that man constitutes himself as subject, because language alone establishes the concept of 'ego' in reality... 'Ego' is he who says 'ego'.

The lawyer's environment operates according to his precepts of law and

order, sustains its logic, its reality, at the price of Bartleby's 'ego';

Consciousness is only possible if it is experienced by contrast. I use *I* only when I am speaking to someone who will be a *you* in my address. It is the condition of dialogue that is constitutive of *person*, for it implies that reciprocally *I* becomes *you* in the address of the one who in turn designates himself as *I* (1971, 84).

Bartleby's refusal is a method of survival, since the lawyer seeks to draw him into a discourse founded upon his negation. This discourse is a hierarchical one in which Bartleby can only be 'you' (the narrator has the room arranged so that he cannot see Bartleby, but Bartleby can *hear* him). When Bartleby takes up residence in the office, the narrator notes, he is *without* a mirror (77); not only does Bartleby unaccountably exist without the customary objects of everyday life, he is without an awareness of his self as object among other objects, as seen. This lack gains significance in relation to the lost quality of reciprocity in language which Bartleby experiences.

The only information the lawyer professes to have about Bartleby's previous existence is that he worked in a 'Dead Letter' office. The inevitable depression arising from this circumstance serves to explain Bartleby's behaviour to the lawyer; he apparently refuses to realize that Bartleby's every utterance continued to be no more than dead letters. Bartleby's *I prefer not to* suggests that he is preferring not to witness the demise of his identity, the constitution of such a paper selfhood under these circumstances. However, for him there is no alternative, he can only mutely enact his drama of denial, and play out the destruction of his self through suicide.

Melville's choice of a legal context for this story of personal disintegration is not confined in its exposition to the specific, it implies the paradigmatic. Law is the site of the inscription and rationalisation

of the structure and beliefs of a society. The narrator had originally chosen what he considered to be a 'safe' practice - a lucrative practice in 'rich men's bonds, and mortgages and title deeds' (60). He thereby largely avoids involvement with the wider application of law, law which in the general sense is founded upon moral, ethical, philosophical and personal premises. His law is of a kind that 'never addresses a jury, or in any way draws down public applause' (60). Just before the arrival of Bartleby the narrator has been promoted to the office of a 'Master of Chancery'. Courts of Chancery deal in equity, 'a legal system...which supplements statute or common law and corrects, if necessary, its failure to accord with what is morally just and fair'⁵. The narrator betrays his dubious suitability for the post when he states that he never indulges 'in dangerous indignation at wrongs and outrages' and considers the job merely a 'pleasantly remunerative' occupation (60). The Wall Street brand of legal practice indicates how far the law, as a *socially determined* integrative system, may drift from such an axiomatic basis. The law in this instance seems to be an inscription of the beliefs of this modern, capitalist 'Wall Street' society, a machine to ensure the subjection of the individual to the system⁶, of the 'singular set of men' (59) like Bartleby, to the production of wealth. Equitable remedies may consist in either of two actions against the person; injunctions against some form of legally classifiable behaviour, or an order for a specific performance or act. The narrator, in his dealings with Bartleby, attempts both (he is *bound* to copy, he is later told that he is *forbidden* the lawyer's premises) and succeeds in neither. Equity *supplements* the law. The lawyer is equitable in his dealings with Bartleby to the extent that he allows him to respond as he chooses to his dictates and suggestions, *within* the context of this system. Yet Bartleby

is not 'particular' (94), prefers not to acknowledge this context.

Law, as an instance of the systematic use of language, becomes the site of a disintegration of meaning, of the decentering of the self. To draw, for analogy, upon recent thought;

Once the conscious subject is deprived of its role as source of meaning - once meaning is explained in terms of conventional systems which may escape the grasp of the conscious subject - the self can no longer be identified with consciousness. It is 'dissolved' as its functions are taken up by a variety of interpersonal systems that operate through it...as it is displaced from its function as centre or source, the self comes to appear more and more as a construct, the result of systems of convention. The discourse of the culture sets limits to the self; the idea of personal identity appears in social contexts; the 'I' is not given but comes to exist (Culler 1975, 28-9).

Bartleby, as has been noted, prefers not to be a construct. He bases his rebellion in a simple linguistic formula, foreign to this system and therefore considered irrational ('At present I would prefer not to be a little reasonable', 81). In the end he prefers not to *be*; the alternative to being a construct is to be 'dissolved'.

As narrator, the lawyer/author goes some way toward enlivening the 'cadaver' (the impression he habitually receives of Bartleby), toward fashioning a person of the dead letter, rather grotesquely reviving the corpse of his chosen 'literary character'. Yet there is more to it than this; the deathly emptiness that perplexes the narrator with regard to Bartleby is merely one manifestation of a more extensive condition. The narrator, returning to his offices after hours, compares Wall Street to Petra. He is later to compare the prison in which Bartleby dies to Egyptian architecture (the description of the prison is very similar to that of the offices, with its lofty black walls and many small cells). These places remind him of dead civilizations; they have out-lived their inhabitants. They exist, like language itself in this peculiar environment,

as structures dislocated from the human. Despite the narrator's efforts to objectify him as a curiosity, his obsession with Bartleby suggests an affinity. He is also the vehicle for the transference of others' agreements, of others' dialogue, others' contracts. His occupation also demands *his* absence from the language he uses, except in so far as he can delegate to Bartleby – but Bartleby refuses the exchange. Bartleby's refusal prompts his move to self-expression in literature. His final statement, 'Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!', recentres the narrator as an authoritative observer, but has the ring of overconfidence (we know he is not prone to 'dangerous indignation'); he is just as much a prisoner of Wall Street. In spite of the narrator's pose of sympathetic detachment from Bartleby's derangement, Wall Street is haunted by the living ghosts of many men. Bartleby's apparent insanity spreads⁷. He remains ultimately incoherent to the lawyer, who fails to penetrate the riddle of his final gesture.

De-composition: The Text

In Part I an integrative and speculative compulsion was noted to operate around the emergence of the irrational in a text. Melville's narrator would also appear to be working in this manner. He wants to produce a *composition*, to remedy a lack in literature created by the 'real' story of Bartleby. However, although Bartleby is presented as 'real' (the would-be author's aim is biographical) he provokes the narrator because of his 'unreal' qualities. This utilitarian, pragmatic, Wall Street world does not easily allow for the incursion of the fantastic, and intimations of the supernatural clearly happen only within the perplexed mind of the narrator. There is little doubt in the minds of other characters that Bartleby is

anything more than deranged. He is not even accorded the romantic stature of madness, he *does* so little that could be construed as mad, outrageous or tragic - except choose to *live* in a place intended only for work. Yet he is never quite fully accounted for. *Bartleby* hovers on the verge of the fantastic.

'Bartleby' has been seen as an exceptionally modern work⁹, It has been discussed as, amongst other clinical approaches, a study in schizophrenia⁹. Whatever the appropriate diagnosis of Bartleby's mental condition might be, it functions within the text as disruptive and obstructive of the attempt to assimilate, to narrate, to create consistency. The possibility that he worked in the 'Dead Letter' office is not forthcoming until the narrator attempts a conclusive diagnosis. The objective, incontrovertible and inexorable nature of Bartleby's disintegration is unrationalised. From the moment of Bartleby's appearance, and until his death, the actions and discourse of both the narrator and Bartleby are affected by illogicality and discontinuity, by incoherence. The integrity of the text, of the mind of the narrator, and of the protagonists as discrete entities begins to dissolve. The narrator's composition is abnegated by Bartleby's decomposition.

Schizophrenia has recently been discussed in terms of entropy¹⁰, of psychic dissolution. Rosemary Jackson has spoken, from a different perspective, of the 'modern fantastic' as being characterized by 'a basic pull toward entropy' (1981, 318). Entropy for Jackson signifies a 'degree zero' of undifferentiation, it involves the transgression of boundaries, changes of state, metamorphosis. She points out that such changes 'are without meaning and are progressively without the will or desire of the subject' (and she cites Kafka's *Metamorphosis* as an example). Bartleby

does not change into anything else, he simply dies; this death seems gratuitous, meaningless and futile. Yet some significance asks to be derived from the fact that Bartleby is presented as a phenomenon of Wall Street; he is obsessed with walls, he is constantly to be seen in a 'dead-wall reverie', and he dies in contemplation of the prison walls. Bartleby is 'organic, human, living, the walls are inorganic, dead, and finally Bartleby too is dead, undifferentiated from the inorganic matter that encloses him. Perversely, at his death, it is noted by the narrator that his prison shows signs of organic growth, turf grows underfoot, grass grows in the clefts. In this sense the 'unreal' quality of the story of Bartleby is correspondent with Jackson's observation of the modern fantastic. Bartleby is the focus of a pull toward entropy, undifferentiation, dissolution, atomization (but here of a redemptive kind). The narrator is disturbed by the thought that he may succumb to Bartleby's derangement, by, perhaps, an 'unceasing fear of becoming an exceedingly unpleasant form of nothingness by a collapse of the self' (a description of the schizoid state in Sullivan 1962, 318). It is the act of writing, the impetus of continuous narrative composition which prevents this, but barely so; its completion rests upon the hazarding of a 'vague report' concerning Bartleby's former employment. This invites speculation, but it sits awkwardly at the finish as a contrivance — a gamble on the adequacy of a psychological rationale which separates Bartleby from the narrator as an anomaly and excludes the fantastic from Bartleby's disintegration. The lawyers security in his world hangs by the thread of this rationale. Bartleby's refusal to be a social subject, and subsequent *reluctance* to be redeemed as a literary 'subject' foreshadows later presentations of 'retreat' into psychosis.

DIS-INTEGRATION IN CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN'S *THE YELLOW WALLPAPER*

Narrative and the Unauthorized Narrator

The Yellow Wallpaper (1892) is the subjective account of the development of a condition of mental illness. A woman talks about an experience that begins as a therapeutic confinement; about her growing obsession with 'deciphering' the pattern on the wallpaper in the room to which she is confined; and demonstrates by stages an increasing loss of psychic stability.

The narrator begins to write on arrival at a 'colonial mansion' (Gilman 1981, 9) that she and her husband have rented for the summer. Their stay is intended both as a holiday and a period of rest for the writer. Her husband John is a doctor, and believes that his wife is suffering from a 'temporary nervous depression' or a 'slight hysterical tendency' (10) which is aggravated by her own imagination. He has confidence that he is able to prescribe the cure'. He establishes her in a room to which she takes an immediate dislike, largely on account of the wallpaper. He condemns her revulsion as silly and irrational and merely a further indication of what he characterizes as a feminine nervous illness; he has her remain in the room on principle (she should not allow herself to 'give way to fancy' (15). He forbids her to meet and talk with people outside of the family. She should only rest and sleep. It appears that she does not leave the room throughout the narration. Social communication is not allowed. John is out most of the day, and apart from the occasional presence of her sister-in-law, who is charged with her

surveillance, she is alone.

The narrator is also, she says, *forbidden* to write; the exercise of imagination, her 'habit of story-making' (15) is strongly discouraged ('I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency. So I try', 16). Despite these measures, she becomes increasingly dissociated from reality, 'gives way to fancy' to the extent that fantasy is no longer distinguishable from what is 'real'; her account charts a steady psychological deterioration into what may be termed obsessional and hallucinatory states focussed upon the pattern in the wallpaper. It concludes with a demonstration of her complete 'madness' - a graphic indictment of her 'treatment'. John arrives to find her crawling around the room in circles. She describes how he faints in astonishment at this sight, and how she continues to crawl around silently, over and over his unconscious body.

She is not narrating a history retrospectively from a present which is either complete or composed. The text is not based upon a literary autobiographical model. It takes, rather, the form of a diary. There is no gap in time across which to objectify her self, her experience, and her place within a series of events. There is no differentiated objective (and 'rational') framing of a subjective (and 'irrational') narrative, but the text is in a sense ironically framed by the interdiction of the rational voice (John's scientific 'no'). Story-telling here (for John, and hence initially his obedient wife) signifies not a mode of ordering, but a potential licence for disorder, for anarchic falsification. He believes that there may be a link between writing fiction and pathology (suggesting that 'it is the writing which made [her] sick', 18). The topic of her discourse is her unaccountable suspicion (to John) of being more seriously ill than

John supposes. The subtext suggests a self increasingly operating on different levels; part of her exists in accord with the orderly imperatives of the external world and John's authority ('there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses...'), part of her does not, is chaotic, rebellious and shadowy. The narrator, as story-maker *manqué*, sets out to commit her 'real' experience to paper, but in the process exposes 'John's wife' as a fiction.

She is of less substance than Bartleby. She is simply a speaker. She reveals neither name nor history — beyond that which resides tacitly in her social role (as a doctor's wife, and a mother). Her language is discursive rather than descriptive. It is (to begin with) the exposition of an internal dialogue about her illness. Immediately, despite the firmness of tone, the narrative style provokes a frisson of uneasiness — it is somehow too private, too negligent of a certain literary decorum ('Still I will proudly declare...', 'Else, why should it be let...', 9). The repeated 'I' creates, for the reader, an uncanny proximity due to the power of contrast between her status as stranger and the reader's as confidant or voyeur. The intimate, chatty tone allows for a randomness and a lack of narrative coherence which also requires an investment of faith (since no adequate reference to the world of the text has established the consistency of what she says with that world). The organization of experience, the ability to objectify herself in writing serves to create the impression of, and assumes the presence of a stable identity ('I must say what I feel and think in some way — it is such a relief', 21). However, her writing self emerges as the site of conflicting discourses.

The inductive power of her state of consciousness is increased through the lack of any objective perspective, more so than would have

been the case if she had presented herself in the more conventional, retrospective 'memoir' form. This first-person narrative strategy invites the reader, implicitly, to register the mind's spiral into madness. First-person narration is that 'condition of discourse in which...the possibility of speaking the truth creates the possibility of misunderstanding, misperceiving and lying' (Martin 1986, 142), but Gilman does not exploit the paranoid potential of the unreliable narrator. There is no temporal or spatial point beyond the narrator's experience from which to disentangle the 'real' from the 'unreal', fact from fancy, and the narration makes no attempt to invite such distinctions. The disintegration of the narrator's mind, her breakdown of identity, is obscured behind this 'I' (whether a reliable or unreliable perceiver) and the community established with the reader.

As it progresses, the narrative suggests that what is designated by this 'I' was always in question, that her reiterated desire to write is symptomatic of the will to construct or preserve an identity. In her relation to others, those who surround, and she feels, control her, the narrator is in a position analogous to that of Bartleby. Her situation is one of subordination to another. Obedience is the condition of her status as an agent. Like Bartleby she is only to speak when she is spoken to. John's voice is invested with the power to speak for both of them. He knows what is good for her, he knows what she is thinking and feeling. She is where John says she is (he discourages self-consciousness, 'John says the very worse thing I can do is to think about my condition', 10). He authorizes what she experiences, and circumscribes her self. Her writing records his prescriptions. As in the case of Bartleby, self-expression in language is not her prerogative (John laughs at her attempts

at self-expression, and infantilizes her, dismissing them as the whims of a child, a silly woman, a 'blessed little goose', 15).

Her writing increasingly expresses a problem, a 'private problem', 'I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind' (10). Part of her acts and speaks in accordance with his version;

So I take phosphates or phosphites - whichever it is, and tonics...and am absolutely forbidden to 'work' until I am well again (10).

Part of her thinks otherwise: 'Personally, I disagree...' (10). This announcement, after her self-portrayal as passive and acquiescent, is equivalent to Bartleby's 'I would prefer not to'. The idea grows that the self expressed in such words is to be hidden ('I know John would think it absurd. But I *must* say what I feel and think...', 21). The writing voice is deceitful, as distinct from the voice of 'John's wife', and sees writing as a method of 'relief', a mode of escape from the former. The writing of the text is an act of deceit, a transgression of authority (even, in its informal style, of literary conventions). It begins by presenting a self that is constrained to report or 'copy' John's words, but provides an alternative scene of communication where the narrator is able to *answer back*, which she may not do when speaking without reinforcing the idea of herself as an irrational 'non-'person. The text becomes the site of a struggle, between the legitimate self (John's wife - as he sees her) and an illegitimate (irrational, 'deceitful') self. When the latter finally becomes dominant, taking over the narration to explain at the end of the story how she has defeated John and 'Jane', this is the first time the name appears and it seems to refer objectively, from an alienated position, to her 'self', a false and imprisoning identity. The narrator stages a

slippage of the narrative 'I'. It is not, at this stage, the writer (who no longer consciously deceives) but the writing itself which is eventually exposed in this text as the locus of deceit.

Narration and Dis-Integration

The shifting position from which the narrator speaks is effected through a hallucinated scene of doubling. When she fails to real-ize her experience in John's eyes, she begins to see 'a woman stooping down and creeping about', 22) in the wallpaper. This hallucination seems to be connected to the experience of herself as deceitful. Both sides are aspects of a self caught between conflicting modes of self-representation. The suspicion grows that she 'can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to skulk about behind that silly and conspicuous front design' (18). There is no doubt as to the reality status of her double (as, for example, is to be found in Hogg's *Sinner*). She herself first introduces it as an 'as if'. However, since there is no position from which to objectify her perception, and since this changes, this text has the disturbing effect not of making what is unreal real (what might be termed the conventional 'madness' of reading) but vice versa — it deceives the observer, the reader into missing (being unprepared for) the reality of this phenomenon. It is eventually as real to the narrator as she is to herself.

This figure in the wallpaper does not remain a paranoid projection, a mirror image; it is constantly forming, shifting, reforming and its formlessness becomes plurality, 'It is always the same shape, only very numerous. And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern' (22). This nameless entity may be one or many, there is no delimitation or differentiation, 'Sometimes I think there are a great many

women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast' (30). These figures transgress the physical boundaries of her room, they are inside and outside; inside the room 'The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out' (23), but she says 'I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind' (31). She sees other women roaming over the countryside, prolific and undifferentiated from the external natural world. Ultimately the narrator rips the paper off the walls to free the woman. The narration shifts suddenly from an objective view of the figurative woman in wallpaper, where the narrator is a discrete observer, to the subjective voice of the hallucinatory figure who has 'got out', 'I don't like to look out of the windows even - there are so many of those creeping women, and they creep so fast. I wonder if they all come out of that wall-paper as I did?' (35).

The loss of the fictional 'as if', which was out-lawed by John as potentially dangerous to a mind not sufficiently equipped with the capacity to maintain a differentiation between the real and the imagined (since such writing involves the repression of its metaphoric status), has ironically taken place in a place not subject to conscious textual control - her mind. John presented her with a possible rational, unified, 'scheduled' ('I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day', 12) version of herself, but the narrative enacts her refusal to be the subject of that prescription. Instead of a story her writing is the transcription of her mental processes, the site of a psychic metamorphosis into her 'deceitful self', formerly denied realization. She is no longer deceptive because she is nobody. She is not 'John's wife', she no longer recognizes the social fiction or symbolic significance of their relationship ('Now why

should that man have fainted...', 36). In relinquishing subjectivity she eludes entrapment in language (though, paradoxically, she continues to write) — existence as a function of language, of a 'false' discourse that is prescribed for her. As Lecercle suggests, 'the subject is nothing outside the order of language by which it has been formed' (1985, 58).

The wallpaper (like the 'dead paper' on which she writes, 10) then becomes an alternative scene of writing (representing figuratively the place where she is being written) which she must re-write 'deceptively', in a mode which she consciously disavows. It has a similar 'mortifying' effect upon the narrator to that which an endless contact with 'dead' letters and 'copying' is suggested to have had upon Bartleby. The pattern is repellent, yellowing, decaying, full of trapped and strangled heads and 'eyes'. As beings marginalized by a dominant discourse, having no control over it (their communication even in protest is null and void — effects nothing) and subjugated within it, they may be said to be demonstrating the experience of language as an assault upon the self, upon self-determination and subjectivity. Its unproblematical function as a mode of self-realization has become inaccessible.

The narrator persists in trying to discover a pattern within the paper, as if her sanity depends upon it. This obsession leads her to discover the figure which turns out to be a reflection of a self trying to escape, to emerge from behind its tracery ('I didn't realize for a long time what the thing was that showed behind, that dim sub-pattern, but now I am quite sure it is a woman', 26). This reading of the wallpaper is carried out, like her writing, in concealment. The wall-paper and the paper on which the narrator writes seem increasingly to have an implicit symbiotic existence in the narrator's mind. The pattern on the wallpaper

operates like the marks on the page, like words, like language itself in relation to the identity of the speaker concealed behind it. The words 'this paper' (16) are ambiguous. The wallpaper displays a confusion of eyes, they go 'all up and down the line' (16), they are 'impertinent' (16). Her writing shows a profusion of 'I's, 'I's which are impertinent having no right to appear on the paper at all (since she has been forbidden to write, and since they do not refer to an equally stable entity), 'I's which are watching the struggle of the woman behind the wall-paper.

Her 'haunting' by the wallpaper is prefigured in the narrator's mind with the kind of tale she might be setting out to write, and which might somehow naturally arise from the situation in which she finds herself. The work begins with a gesture by the narrator toward writing in a nineteenth century gothic manner. The action is to be set in a colonial mansion, it might even - perhaps must - be haunted, 'there is something queer about it' (9). The building has the gothic characteristics of dwarfing size ('it is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer'), age, and emptiness. The scene is set for the introduction of the supernatural by her expressions of superstition. Less 'fanciful' than she, John nevertheless *represents* superstition, and this is manifest in her recognition of his determination not to confront anything disruptive of his ordered world. John personifies those limits that are to be transgressed, the 'real' world, reason operating through the exclusion of madness, without which a gothic reversal and disruption could not happen. He is introduced as a pragmatic scientist, whose intelligence is threatened by such things,

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures. John is a

physician... (9).

However, the narrator has no intention of allowing her text to be trapped by an established artistic context², her sense of dis-ease to be contained by a conventional literary interpretation. The occasion of the supernatural, as an agency external to herself and allowed to account for something which cannot - as far as she can see - be accounted for, would 'reach the height of romantic felicity...would be asking too much of fate' (9).

Instead of unseen things originating in the external world, or emanating from the fabric of the 'ancestral mansion', it is herself, that John scoffs at, 'You see he does not believe I am sick!' (10). That which cannot be accounted for turns out to be located inside her. It is not only the house but also her self which has 'something queer about it'. Her sickness, she feels, is of a kind not to be felt or seen or measured scientifically (despite John's attempts). The narrator's writing may be seen initially as an attempt to 'put down in figures' something that seems unreal. The text itself then becomes uncanny, something is being uncovered that should remain hidden. It is haunted, as the narrator is haunted, by the unseen. Her sickness, whatever it is, is not described, is *nameless*, all that can be said is that it is *not* what John or science says it is ("Better in body perhaps--" I began, and stopped short, for he sat up straight and looked at me with such a stern, reproachful look that I could not say another word. "My darling", said he, "I beg of you...that you will never for one instant let that idea enter your mind! There is nothing so dangerous...", 24). Madness is repressed in the narrator's mind, and in the narration ('the front pattern', 25) but 'gets out in spite of her', returns in the text like a 'bad dream'. When the narrator's mind turns to why she

is not 'getting well faster' (whether it is writing that made her sick, and why nobody believes that she is really sick) the prohibition not to speak about her suspicion that her mind is sick triggers a shift from her writing on the paper to writing about, and through, the wallpaper, 'I wish I could get well faster. But I must not think about that. This paper looks to me as if it *knew* what a vicious influence it had! There is a recurrent spot where the pattern lolls...' (16).

Her growing obsession with the paper is paranoid in the sense that she attempts to construct system, order, meaning from the wallpaper's mysterious convolutions, and experiences it as an invasive, hostile, persecutory force, 'I determine for the thousandth time that I *will* follow that pointless pattern to some sort of conclusion' (19). She remains for hours in contemplation of the wall 'trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately' (25). She is convinced that it is a design, that it must be systematic, but 'on a pattern like this, by daylight, there is a lack of sequence, a defiance of law, that is a constant irritant to the normal mind' (25). She hypothesizes a general law of construction, 'the whole thing goes horizontally, too, at least it seems so, and I exhaust myself in trying to distinguish the order of its going in that direction' (20) but finds that order constantly collapses into chaos, 'it is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate and provoke study, and when you follow the lame uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide—plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions' (13). The wallpaper takes on a fantastic quality, the nature of its construction is foreign, illogical,

unknown,

I know a little of the principle of design, and I know this thing was not arranged on any laws of radiation, or alternation, or repetition, or symmetry, or anything else that I ever heard of (20).

It becomes persecutory and uncanny, 'you think you have mastered it, but just as you get well underway in following, it turns a backsomersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you. It is like a bad dream' (25). It seems to be an organic thing, a pattern-in-process, 'budding and sprouting in endless convolutions' (25).

The shift of the scene of reading from the text as it engages referentially with the 'real' world, to the enigma of the wallpaper — or the narrator's reading of the wallpaper, reproduces on another level the textual mechanism delineated in the previous section. As Conrad Shumaker has pointed out,

once the narrator starts attempting to read the pattern of the wallpaper, the reader must become a kind of psychological detective in order to follow and appreciate the narrative. In a sense, he [she] too is viewing a tangled pattern with a woman behind it, and he must learn to revise his interpretation of the pattern as he goes along in order to make sense of it (1985, 595).

However, the wallpaper defies resolution. The process described here of constant revision, theoretical assimilation and recuperation is thwarted by the 'backsomersaults' effected by the narrator, whose relationship to the wallpaper goes through a series of erratic emotional and conceptual transformations. Further, the fixed point in this activity, the woman behind the tangle, the narrating mind, dislocates. The theoretical detective may then find that it is not pattern, or narrative, but 'mind' which becomes the object of investigation, the mind behind the bars, the 'I's.

In contrast to the nineteenth century texts where narrative and plot

are both investigation and the subjects of investigation (the sanity/madness of a character or narrating mind must be established through an encoded paranoid reading activity), this is a text where madness, though not rhetorically represented, is present. It is the mind itself, the seat of a madness which is no longer played off against 'sanity', which becomes the complex object of interpretation. On this level the text signals a shift in the literary approach to madness related to the early twentieth century developments in discourse surrounding disturbed states of consciousness (where the 'normal' mind becomes the object of the Freudian gaze).

This angle is of particular interest to feminist theorists. The text might be considered 'unreadable', outside of the context of the tale's 'female meaning' (as Haney-Peritz, among others, has proposed as the condition of its comprehension, 1986). Occupying a marginal position in relation to society, culture and the symbolic order women are also situated on the borders of chaos, irrationality and darkness. Gilman's text makes this link between woman and madness². Feminist studies of this work have interpreted the text as a powerful metaphor for the positioning of woman, and the predicament of the woman writer in relation to male patriarchal discourse⁴. The narrator's paranoid search for system in the wallpaper has been seen in this context as an attempt to 'read' the plot of patriarchal subjection which has been woven around her, and around all women⁵; yet as MacPike has suggested, 'In relation to the 'principle of design' imposed by the masculine universe, both the wallpaper and her mind refuse to follow any logic other than their own...the wallpaper becomes at once the symbol of her confinement and of her freedom' (MacPike 1975, 288).

Haney-Peritz concentrates upon exploring the significance of the work for feminist literary criticism, using a Lacanian interpretation to demonstrate what is happening to the mind of the female narrator in the text. She proposes that the walls within which the narrator is entrapped, the 'ancestral house' which is open to interpretation as a patriarchal monument 'must be thought of as in, and of, what Lacan has called the symbolic order, the order of Language' (1986, 117). Within the confines of this study it is pertinent to note⁶ that Gilman's narrative strategy, and her treatment of madness, involve uncovering the speaker as a subject of discourse, an effect of language, and deploying psychological breakdown as a form of protest. The dimensions of the linguistic alienation effect, in Lacanian theory, is not intrinsic to female experience. Feminist theory has however been valuable in uncovering the links between subjectivity and the mechanics of language, where women are recognized to be doubly alienated by a linguistic system thoroughly inhabited by patriarchy.

In contrast to the texts so far discussed, madness, or the experience of madness, is here not objectively 'represented', but may be thought of as happening on the level of textuality. Madness in *The Yellow Wallpaper* emerges partly through the exposure of the non-sense in writing, the way in which fragmentation defeats systematization. Madness resides not so much in the event of hallucination but seeps through the space left by the changing place of the narrator, the collapse of differentiation. It might be said that the text (the mind of 'the narrator', the 'colonial mansion' of the symbolic order) is haunted by the '*délire*' of language, as defined by Jean-Jacques Lecercle. The proliferation of 'I's in the text (in 'this paper'), 'eyes' in the wallpaper, and 'I's that come out of the wallpaper are a manifestation of the 'illegitimate ambiguity' of the word. This narrative

is structured around an example of what Lecercle has recognized as the 'drifting language of madness' (1985, 139), a psychopathological or schizophrenic disruption of signification, the 'dark side of meaning'. The text is itself both double and schizoid in the sense that a 'darker' subtext (the activity in the wallpaper) struggles for hegemony or possession (in the demonic sense) of the diary/letter pretext⁷;

On the dark side, meaning proliferates, in short threads that can hardly manage to weave a coherent text: there is no totality, no guarantee, and the field is never closed...the system gives way to mere chance, or, in other words, to the semiotic processes of the unconscious (Lecercle 1985, 71).

The wallpaper (in its copious, prolific, self-propagating and fungoid form) adumbrates the pathological genesis of this dark side, that which is denied in the act of narration, in the creation of a fictional 'romantic felicity', it is analogous to what Lacan might call 'literary creation in psychosis' (Lacan 1977, 189). What has been indicated as the paranoid search for structure and totality within its design by the narrator is a defense against its infectious, dementing quality ('the subject avoids being possessed by language by reflecting on it, finding its laws, commenting on the words') (ibid., 1977, 78).

The characteristics of the wallpaper in this (con)text may be seen as analogous to the phenomena of Schreber's *Nervensprache* or 'nerve-language' in his *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (as described and not as directly manifest in his work where sentences are always completed). The visual as opposed to auditory nature of the hallucination of the narrator in *The Yellow Wallpaper* may be traced to her confusion of the phonic and the graphic in the phoneme 'I/eye', where 'I' is associated with watching and being watched. Schreber explains how he is constantly subject to 'compulsive thinking' which threatens his psychic stability and sense of

identity. This can be initiated by autonomous voices heard within his head or coming from outside. They are the proliferators of inanity and non-sense;

From the beginning the *system of not-finishing-a-sentence* prevailed, that is to say the vibrations caused in my nerves and the words so produced contain not mainly finished thoughts, but unfinished ideas, or only fragments of ideas, which my nerves have to supplement to make up the sense. It is in the nature of nerves that if unconnected words or started phrases are thrown into them, they automatically attempt to complete them to finished thoughts satisfactory to the human mind (Schreber 1988, 216).

Schreber represents himself as mastering these onslaughts by refusing to complete the fragments of syntactic units. The response which they demand is not productive of sense but of more nonsense, which he then feels compelled to rationalize further. He counters nonsense with nonsense by repetition. Schreber exercises his intellectual capacity to differentiate³, and thus (he believes) evades entrapment in *délire*, as Lacan comments with regard to Schreber:

The subject in the grip of these mysteries does not doubt his ability, Created being though he be, to elude with his words the traps set by the alarming inanity of his Lord, or to maintain himself in the face of the destruction that he believes his God capable of launching against him, or anyone else, by virtue of a right to which he is entitled in the name of the Order of the world...[he] prevents his fall only by the support of his Word and by his faith in speech (Lacan 1977, 204-6).

Gilman's narrator persists in her attempt to discover pattern and sense in the perverse convolutions of the wallpaper, which nevertheless defies this search. Like Schreber's system of not-finishing-a-sentence the shapes in the wallpaper are described as 'silly and conspicuous' (18), 'pointless' (19); 'bloated curves and flourishes—a kind of 'debased Romanesque' with *delirium tremens* go waddling up and down in isolated columns of fatuity' (20).

The narrator positions herself in relation to her visual hallucination

with a different form of reversal; being the victim of its perversity she sees the logic of its growth as a form of tyranny, this endows the pattern with design and significance; it is a set of bars intended to entrap a woman. The reading of the paper develops into a plot, the woman must not be allowed to escape. Eventually she identifies with this figure, it is herself at the centre of this cage, and she *must* find a way to escape:

If that woman does get out, and tries to get away, I can tie her!...I don't like to look out of the windows even — there are so many women, and they creep so fast. I wonder if they all came out of the wallpaper as I did? (34-35).

She herself completes the design, is at its centre. However, her escape proves to be not so much a release as a new form of entrapment, a different kind of subjection to the wallpaper. Her statement, 'I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back', though apparently an affirmation of mastery, displays the extent of her defeat. It may be impossible to discover the 'order of its going' in terms of the design, but there is no doubt that the whole thing goes *around* the room. The new self disintegrates as it emerges. The woman described becomes an effect of repetition like the pattern itself, crawling round and round the room with her body pressed against a running yellow 'smooch' on the wall, which she herself has perhaps created in trying to follow the pattern. She may be one — going very fast ('and though I can always see her, she *may* be able to creep faster than I can turn!', 31) — or many, either way the loss of her former sense of identity is complete.

Like Schreber she responds to what seems to be a threatening anarchy of signs by mimicking their activity, by inhabiting them. Schreber however retains his belief in signification, in language, and rehabilitates his subjectivity within a phantasmagoric symbolic code, whereas this woman is

unable to do so, is 'entitled' to nothing, has lapsed into a 'pre-social', 'pre-vocal' (she crawls like an infant) condition. The present disturbed state in which the crawling woman finds herself (as described, impossibly, by 'the diarist') might be called both *anti-patriarchal* (she crawls over John's body), and anti-narrative.

Protest and Schizoid Textuality

'Illegitimate ambiguity' in *The Yellow Wallpaper* resides not in the event of madness (as in the aporia inherent in the 'paranoid texts'), or in the mode of representing that event, but in its attempt at non-representation — its presentation. Gilman does not describe madness as object in this only superficially coherent narrative. Narrative strategy here exploits the potential of story-telling language as a vehicle of disorder and destabilization, rather than an ordering principle. The text both depicts and generates a loss of the capacity to decipher, to *make sense* from a system of signs. It is still essentially descriptive, but the fragmentary nature of the information given defies orientation outside of the thought processes of the narrating mind.

What sense there is of systematic continuity is threatened and threatening. The narrator continues to write whilst John attempts to break into the room with an axe. The tense switches back in the last phrases of the text from present to past, but continuity has been radically disrupted. In between the last moment and the moment in which the narrator has again picked up the pen to write she has crawled around the room and over her husband several times (as she writes he is unconscious on the floor). In the duration of that hiatus writing was abandoned for a corporeal enactment of the denial of reason, an escape

from logic, a demonstration of what the text cannot say; John interrogates the narrator, 'For God's sake, what are you doing?' and she writes, 'I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder. 'I've got out at last', said I' (36). The single inversion here of 'I said' is suggestive of the speaking/writing 'I' as distanced, as artificial, as slightly problematical. The shift from her providing an objective account of the movements of the woman crawling in the wallpaper to an account of herself creeping around the walls, related from the peculiarly objective, split-off position of narrator, both enacts and describes something similar to a schizoid experience. The author has contrived that the narrator's 'I' should demonstrate its dissociation from its initial fairly stable position (outside of, and in control of the confusion in the wallpaper), without the total collapse of grammatical continuity or narrative coherence. Yet the represented breakdown of the subject in the end has the effect of rendering the figure writing as hallucinatory as the figure in the wallpaper, even whilst it is contained within an essentially stable narrative form. The text begins as an act of deception and becomes as deceptive as the wallpaper itself. It seems on the surface to 'form around the common centre' of the narrator's organizing mind and then to 'rush off' in a 'headlong plunge of distraction' (20) as this centre disintegrates. It is perhaps only (or eminently) recuperable, as has recently been attempted, in terms of the psycho-analysis of the female narrator, the examination of the modes of continuity between the structure and language of the narrative and the activity of the unconscious encoded within the hallucinatory wallpaper, yet, as Jeanette King and Pam Morris have suggested 'a self that is irremediably split and displaced has no intrinsic meaning to be read'. They see this resistance to recuperation as

advantageous to feminist literary and social politics:

The desire to discover an immanent meaning restricts this polysemic potential. There is...everything to be gained from an espousal of openness — a rejection of any authoritative, essentialist theory of meaning, acknowledging instead the predominance of the signifiers over the signified...(King and Morris 1989, 32).

This exploration of breakdown, this 'illegitimate' text which represents itself as produced under prohibition — an 'authentic' subjective account of madness — in important ways foreshadows the fluidity, the breakdown of 'realist' narrative method (already both subverted — as Rosemary Jackson suggests — and reinforced by the unsettling strategies of gothic fiction) in twentieth century texts. The disintegration of the structure of 'character', of a rationally circumscribed subjectivity is dramatized, in the company of 'madness' as a metaphoric presence, in the work of such writers Virginia Woolf and Samuel Beckett. It is interesting to note that when discussing her sense of alienation from patriarchal discourse found in texts written by men Woolf later (in 1929) echoes the hallucinatory images in the wallpaper described by Gilman's female narrator:

After reading a chapter or two a shadow seemed to lie across the page. It was a straight dark bar, a shadow shaped something like the letter 'I'. One began dodging this way and that to catch a glimpse of the landscape behind it. Whether that was indeed a tree or a woman walking I was not quite sure. Back one was always hailed to this letter 'I'. One began to be tired of 'I'. Not but what this 'I' was a most respectable 'I'; honest and logical; hard as a nut, and polished for centuries by good teaching and good feeding. I respect and admire that 'I' from the bottom of my heart. But — here I turned a page or two, looking for something or other — the worst of it is that in the shadow of the letter 'I' all is shapeless as mist (Woolf 1977, 95).

The modernist project is often spoken of in general as a vehicle of 'psycho-pathological' literary manifestations⁹. The demonstrations of attempted liberation from an oppressive discourse of selfhood, in the writing of such authors as Gilman and Woolf, may be formulated negatively

as an intrinsically female literary 'madness':

In the realm of culture...masculine values prevail and deflect the vision of the woman novelist, inserting a duality into the female narrative, turned Janus-like toward the responses of both self and other. This schizoid perspective can fracture the female text (Abel 1989, 162).

It is however indicative of an identified 'modern writing', by men and women, which enlists perceptions of madness to similar ends. As Makiko Minow-Pinkney has pointed out:

If feminine writing is an attempt to inscribe positions against or alternative to those of the dominant male order, then the possibility of such writing does not exclusively correspond to biological gender...the valorisation of the 'feminine' remains meaningful precisely as a strategy of reversal, as a challenge to conventional norms of writing (1987, 16).

The Yellow Wallpaper may be understood (within the context of the changing function of 'madness' in narrative) to demonstrate a hypothetical moment of transition; from the ambiguous location of madness in the behaviour of a specific character, and the paranoid thinking processes evoked by narrative strategies which create a tension in keeping it there, to what might be termed a schizoid textuality which defeats these through an awareness of the essential disjunction and alienation of the self as subject constituted in and through social, linguistic and literary convention.

AUTHENTIC DIS-CONTINUITY IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *MRS. DALLOWAY*

Narration and Authentic Dis-Continuity

Virginia Woolf may be considered innovative in her considered attempt to synthesize particular insights into altered states of consciousness with literary method. Her treatment of such states in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) is accessible from several angles. It may be treated diachronically, as a phenomenon of the disintegrating, post-war 'modernist' cosmos. From another perspective, although counter-balanced by an awareness of psychosis as alienation and suffering, it may be characterized as combining the lyrical and the political, and further located in relation to the mid-twentieth century movement towards an approbation of 'controlled disintegration' and the disapprobation of the false stability ratified by the conventions of social, moral and psychological institutions. It is *avant-garde* in its affirmation of a schizoid, dispersed consciousness (a precursor of Laingian psychology). Woolf's fiction may also be approached synchronically (in terms of recent theoretical developments) as paradigmatic, demonstrating both positively and pessimistically the relations between language, femininity, subjectivity and psychosis. Again, it appears to be an antecedent of the modern debate which continues the project of dismembering binary thought and establishing an affirmative continuum between sanity and psychosis as the site of a protean, generic subjectivity. With regard to *Mrs. Dalloway*, each of these perspectives converge at the point where Woolf is understood to use exceptional psychic conditions strategically toward a form both of dramatized social and an

implicit literary criticism. Conversely, she may be said to employ social and literary criticism toward a positive presentation of such states.

When setting out to examine this text it is perhaps necessary to take into account the web of ideas articulated by Woolf that are contextual to, and work through *Mrs. Dalloway*. Woolf was exceptionally self-conscious as an artist (in contrast to the writers so far discussed) and the corpus of her non-fictional writing may be positioned in intertextual relation to her fictional work. Woolf said in her diary of *Mrs. Dalloway*: 'I want to give life and death, sanity and insanity; I want to criticise the social system and to show it at work, at its most intense' (June 19th 1923, in Woolf 1978, 82). The text shows this system at work upon and within the individual psyche, the juncture and locus of interplay of these delineations. She wished to create a study of 'the world seen by the sane and the insane side by side' (October 14th 1922, *ibid.*, 77). This double vision does not mean that the opposition between the sane and the insane simply collapses in her fiction. Yet it does mean a little more than an exploration of insanity as the negative against which sanity is defined.

Continuity, within Woolf's work, can refer both to the process which gives rise to the represented 'unity', undividedness, wholeness of the individual as a subject, and to the 'solidity' of the text as it presents an interface between individual and social 'realities', or public and private registers of experience. Psychosis, as the instance of individual mental distress is explored as a way into, and as expressive of, a more 'essential' and poetic level of individual experience; as a kind of authentic discontinuity.

In *Mrs. Dalloway* the sane objectify the insane as deluded, alienated

from reality, as other, but the text pre-empts objectification, or seeing from one side. The novel inhabits and transforms this dualism. The 'social system' is present as a framework of binary codes within which individual identity is fixed and positioned (man/woman, sane/mad). The seeing from the 'other' side subtly challenges this system.

Woolf's stance is dissident, she opposes the confinement of plot, linearity, system. In the essay 'Modern Fiction' (1925) she rejects an inhibitive and compulsive form of writing where, 'The writer seems constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall, to provide plot...' (Woolf 1984, 149). She takes on that 'tyrant'; in many other, and connected ways, she begins to 'unravel' the plot created by what she characterizes in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) as an essentially masculine writing (the great male novelists, the great 'male sentence', 'the weight, the pace, the stride of a man's mind' (Woolf 1977, 73))

Central to the text of *Mrs. Dalloway* is a treatment of madness that reflects a concern with both the social and literary construction of selfhood and with ways of perceiving reality. Woolf attempts to institute a difference between these, and, in a sense, to render one a 'corrective' of the other. Woolf tried to create a form of writing in reaction to a narrative that displaces the feminine as 'other',

some of the finest works of our greatest living writers fall upon deaf ears. Do what she will a woman cannot find in them that fountain of perpetual life which the critics assure her is there...they celebrate male virtues, enforce male values and describe the world of men (Woolf 1977, 97).

This canonical writing was architectonic ('sentences built...into arcades and domes' *ibid.*, 73), about order, but in danger of fossilizing, becoming 'hardened and set' (*ibid.*, 74). It was a labour of 'solidity', as she says in

'Modern Fiction', from which life escapes (Woolf 1984, 149). The paranoid texts discussed earlier may be seen to engage in this 'labour of solidity' but introduce gaps, cracks and fissures which undermine the foundations of these structures. Woolf's idea was in a sense to string together such gaps, to produce a continuum out of the extraneous and uncharted: 'let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness' (ibid., 150). She strives for the narrative representation of what she believes to be 'life itself', the representation not of an external but of an internal reality. The bodywork of plot, the specifications of coordinates of time and space must be taken apart, until there is 'no scaffolding: scarcely a brick to be seen' (January 26th 1920; Woolf 1978, 42).

The provocative narratives in Part I were seen as problematizing the readable, as exaggerating and exploiting conventions of reading the world and the text. Woolf also sets out to challenge convention, but as a result of a textual participation in disturbed psychological states rather than inducing a paranoid response in aligning these with madness. Interest for the modern writer lies, she says, 'in the dark places of psychology':

The accent falls a little differently; the emphasis is upon something hitherto ignored; at once a different outline of form becomes necessary, difficult for us to grasp, incomprehensible to our predecessors (Woolf 1984, 152).

The delving into 'dark places' in her work includes a concern with 'madness' or disturbed states of consciousness, not essentially to provoke or disrupt, but questing for the extra- in the 'ordinary mind' ('Examine for a moment an ordinary mind...', Woolf 1984, 149) for so long subject to what she sees as a reductive and naïve traditional literary treatment (and further, to a social and medical suppression).

Gilman's narrator finds an essential part of her experience silenced, and is finally driven to relinquish linguistic expression entirely at the end of *The Yellow Wallpaper*, though the story carries on being told. Woolf's idea is to create another kind of literary language that will express that 'other' that is suppressed in Gilman's story². The task is not a simple one, but confronts Woolf in all its complexity and apparent paradox. Her struggle with psychological intimacy resonates curiously with the confessions of Gilman's narrator:

As I think, the diary writing has greatly helped my style; loosened the ligatures. [Entry for following day] What I was going to say was that I think writing must be formal. The art must be respected. This struck me reading some of my notes here, for if one lets the mind run loose it becomes egotistic; personal, which I detest. At the same time the irregular fire must be there; and perhaps to loose it one must begin by being chaotic, but not appear in public like that (Woolf 1978, 96).

She goes on to note that at this point she is 'driving' her way 'through the mad chapters of *Mrs.D*', and wonders whether the book would have been better without them. She is uncertain, but pursues her attempt to expose the pattern underneath, to 'trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent' (Woolf 1984, 150).

Social Coercion and the 'Authentic Self'

Mrs. Dalloway involves the formulation of a nexus of conflicting principles, and an examination of the way in which these are deployed can reveal the extent to which the text is engaged in creating a persuasive context for the ultimately affirmative presentation of discomposed psychic states.

Mrs. Dalloway follows a day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway, a middle-class housewife, as she organizes a party which is to take place in the evening. As the wife of Richard Dalloway her existence is that of a

society hostesses; systematized, restricted and structured.

In all this there was a great deal of Dalloway...a great deal of public spirited, British Empire, tariff-reform, governing-class spirit, which had grown on her, as it tends to do.

Personally, however, Clarissa resents such psychic regimentation,

With twice his wits, she had to see things through his eyes — one of the tragedies of married life. With a mind of her own, she must always be quoting Richard (Woolf 1976, 69).

Clarissa is aware of leading, in a sense, a double life: partly the coherent existence of the solid Mrs. Dalloway, and partly the incoherent and fluid existence of a private Clarissa. Simultaneously the narration follows the experience of Septimus, a 'shell-shocked' soldier, through the hours leading up to his suicide. Not only has Septimus left this society behind in order to fight for 'his' country, he has found that it is impossible to return. It has lost significance for him ('it might be possible, Septimus thought, looking at England from the train window, as they left Newhaven; it might be possible that the world itself is without meaning', 79).

This parallelism has lead critics to diagnose the text and characters in the text as 'schizophrenic'. Herbert Marder says, for example,

as an account of dissociation, both mental and social, the novel is a book about splitting, and it demonstrates the split in its method of narration (Marder 1986, 56).

Barbara Hill Rigney draws upon the beliefs of R. D. Laing to diagnose both Clarissa and Septimus,

Laing's definition of schizophrenia, explored in *The Divided Self*, applies quite clearly to Septimus and, to a degree, to Clarissa as well (Rigney 1978, 47).

Harvena Richter says that there is a contrast between the minds of Clarissa and Septimus,

Septimus is schizophrenic...Clarissa is divided in another way...the outgoing social self, oriented toward life, and the inner emotional self, concerned with failure and death (Richter 1982, 309).

It would appear from this emphasis that the attempt to redeem or validate psychotic experience reinforces the exclusion of such experience by presenting it as alienation³.

Phyllis Rose, on the other hand, has called *Mrs. Dalloway* 'the most schizophrenic of English novels' (Rose 1978, 125), linking psychosis with drug-induced states. It is equivalent in that the novel tries to express an 'alternative, transcendent reality'. It is this use of the term which seems to be most appropriate to the text. It is not really a case study, it is not attempting to explain or more clearly understand madness as madness, but as censored psychic territory. The diagnosis of Clarissa and Septimus as representations of schizophrenics misses the dynamic of the text, which positions their 'schizoid' experience not simply as expressive of alienation or breakdown but as alternative and oppositional.

Barbara Hill Rigney says that 'Woolf, like Laing, indicates that insanity, after all, may be the only escape from society's own state of schizophrenia called normality...' (Rigney 1978, 63). It is not so much escape perhaps as antidote. Neither is post-war London really a measure of normality (but perhaps Laing's polemical methodology has a little in common with Woolf's). The Great War is over, but not its effects ('the late age of the world's experience had bred in them all, all men and women, a well of tears' 10). Both Clarissa and Septimus have undergone assaults on their sense of the continuity and stability of their existence, and have been rendered more than usually vulnerable by their suffering. This heightened sensitivity and instability are seen against the rigidified attitudes and ideology persisting after the war⁴. The Dalloways live in Westminster, which as Jeremy Tambling has pointed out, is the 'seat of government, of public buildings, of the nation's religion and its monuments'

(Tambling 1989, 141). The consciousnesses of Clarissa and Septimus are being forged in a state of existence where the pull toward chaos and the push toward control, system, and restraint are in radical conflict.

Further to her juxtaposition of male and female experience, apparent sanity and insanity, Woolf also contrasts the creation of order (government) with destruction (Septimus is an emissary from the front). Whereas Gilman's narrator plays out an alignment that she experiences as socially entrenched and persistent (male/sanity/order, female/insanity/destruction) and parodies their insidiousness with the breakdown of her narrator, Woolf moves the pieces around. She makes use of the widespread phenomenon of male psychosis after the war to destabilize the alignment of woman with the sub-rational, alienated consciousness. Feminist psychoanalytical readings of *Mrs. Dalloway* trace the ways in which Clarissa's suffering is founded in her femininity, in alienation, in the continuously thwarted attempt to forge a stable identity under patriarchy. Elizabeth Abel asserts that 'Woolf represents the war as a vast historical counterpart to male intervention in women's lives' (Abel 1989, 41). Yet Septimus is also a victim of patriarchy, as so many other men were casualties of a ruthless martial ethos⁵. Septimus's shell-shocked psyche struggles to repress the mind-shattering images of war: as he stands in the street watching the stately and omnibus motor-car pass by having just back-fired like a 'pistol shot' — a 'violent explosion' — it was 'as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames' (Woolf 1976, 15). He feels that he has 'a brain made sensitive by eons of evolution. Scientifically speaking, the flesh was melted off the world. His body was macerated until only the nerve fibres were left' (62).

Septimus is insane, but Septimus's insanity is *opposed* to the inhibitive 'sanity' of his doctors. Dr. Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw perform a role in many ways comparable to that of John in Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*. They tyrannize over the psyche, function as the legislative agents of patriarchy. Holmes is dismissive of Septimus's mental disturbance: 'headaches, sleeplessness, fears, dreams - nerve symptoms and nothing more he said...health is largely a matter in your own control' (82). Holmes likes good food, society, and old furniture and remains uncontaminated and unconvinced by the complexity of the disordered psyche. Sir William, an eminent Harley Street psychiatrist, bastion of high society and servant of the afflicted rich is a 'priest of science', 'a fine figurehead of ceremonies', laden with responsibility and privilege. He is known as a man of 'extraordinary distinction', 'lightning skill and almost infallible accuracy in diagnosis', and as Woolf sardonically writes of 'sympathy, tact, understanding of the human soul' (85). Like Gilman's John, or Weir Mitchell, he decides that Septimus's 'complete physical and nervous breakdown' (85) is 'merely a question of rest...rest, rest, rest; a long rest in bed. There was a delightful home down in the country...' (86).

Like John, Sir William also has an instinctual aversion to the naming of madness: 'he never spoke of 'madness'; he called it not having a sense of proportion' (86). When people display exaggerated and unreasonable behaviour, he is ready with a practical solution that silences their experience and replaces it with another:

Health we must have; and health is proportion; so that when a man comes into your room and says he is Christ (a common delusion), and has a message, as they mostly have, and threatens, as they often do, to kill himself, you invoke proportion; order rest in bed; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages... (89).

For Bradshaw madness is stepping out of line, and the line is very straight, like the rows of soldiers seen by Clarissa's old friend Peter Walsh marching through London. Proportion involves behaviour like Lady Bexborough's, who opened a bazaar with a telegram informing her of her son's death in her hand (6).

It is not only men who play a part in this web of oppressive and violatory forces threatening the autonomy of 'sentient' minds. Clarissa experiences an irrational and obsessive hatred of Miss Kilman, who she believes is taking her daughter from her. Miss Kilman, 'or the idea of her...had become one of those spectres with which one battles in the night; one of those spectres who stand astride us and suck up half our life blood, dominators and tyrants' (13). She is a woman who has (in Clarissa's eyes) 'failed' to be feminine, and represents a monstrous masculinity. She tries to persuade Clarissa's daughter Elizabeth to become a doctor, a member of parliament - to join the ranks of 'those people busy about their activities, hands putting stone to stone, minds eternally occupied not with trivial chatterings...but with thoughts of ships, of business, of law, of administration...' (121). Miss Kilman represents for Clarissa an agent of conversion, of an authoritarian, vengeful Christian God. To Clarissa this is destructive. As she watches an old woman, alone in her room opposite, Clarissa thinks, 'There were something solemn in it - but love and religion would destroy that, whatever it was, the privacy of the soul. The odious Kilman would destroy it' (113).

There are two kinds of religious consciousness in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Miss Kilman represents one, a despotic and autocratic, doctrinal state religion. Clarissa and Septimus suggest another, a mysticism that derives from the 'unity' or truth of multiplicity, the interpenetration of all

things, the dissolution of the self into the other. As Septimus feels, 'leaves were alive; trees were alive. And the leaves being connected by millions of fibres with his own body, there on the seat, fanned it up and down; when the branch stretched he, too, made that statement. The sparrows fluttering, rising, and falling...the white and blue, barred with black branches. Sounds made harmonies...All taken together meant the birth of a new religion' (22). Unlike Schreber, Septimus does not in the end seem to internalize external oppressive ideological structures to produce a persecutory theological schema. His doctor does not become a vindictive God, Septimus rejects their coercive legislation. Bradshaw is a juncture, a node in a network of oppressive ideological structures, implicated in the prohibitive, distorting regime from which Septimus and Clarissa need to disentangle their consciousness.

Sir William is the point at which the 'social system' is 'at work at its most intense', policing the experience of the individual, where private meets public. Big Ben too becomes an agent in this exercise.

For having lived in Westminster — how many years now? over twenty, — one feels even in the midst of traffic, or waking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense...before Big Ben strikes. There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour, irrevocable. The leaden circles dissolved in the air (6).

Doctors and clocks⁶ are locked in a struggle to subjugate, 'correct' and convert the chaotic mind, the dissolving subjectivity into coordination and synchronization:

Shredding and slicing, dividing and subdividing, the clocks of Harley Street nibbled at the June day, counselled submission, upheld authority, and pointed out in chorus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion (91).

Clarissa appears to rebel against this regulation attempting to preserve a chaotic, fluid subjectivity which exists simultaneously across past and

present, transgressing temporal boundaries. The text opens with her return to her girlhood world of Bourton and a self which preceded her negation or marginalization within the social system. She thus escapes being 'invisible; unseen; unknown...this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway' (11). When her girlhood love, Peter Walsh, returned from India, visits her, the boundaries of her self as Mrs. Dalloway begin to dissolve ('Take me with you, Clarissa thought impulsively, as if he were starting directly upon some great voyage', 43). Possibilities are unshackled for an escape from her present identity, but Clarissa is dragged back into the other reality:

The sound of Big Ben striking the half-hour struck out between them with extraordinary vigour, as if a young man, strong, indifferent, inconsiderate, were swinging dumb-bells this way and that (44)

The clock strikes twelve as Septimus makes his way to see Bradshaw:

It was precisely twelve o'clock; twelve by Big Ben...Twelve was the hour of their appointment. Probably, Rezia [Septimus's wife] thought, that was Sir William Bradshaw's house with the grey motor car in front of it. (The leaden circles dissolved in the air.) (84).

The clock strikes as Septimus kills himself. It strikes again as Clarissa empathizes with the suffering of Septimus (having heard the news from Mrs. Bradshaw at her party):

She felt somehow very like him — the young man who had killed himself...The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. But she must go back. She must assemble (165).

Doctor Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw are represented as agents complicit in a (characteristically masculine) conspiracy to dominate and control.

Doctor Holmes, seen through Septimus's eyes, is a dictatorial image of violence. When Holmes visits the couple Septimus recoils:

Human nature, in short, was on him — the repulsive brute, with the blood-red nostrils. Holmes was on him. Dr. Holmes came quite regularly every day. Once you stumble, Septimus wrote on the back of a postcard, human nature is on you. Holmes is on you. Their only

chance was to escape, without letting Holmes know (83).

It is Holmes' arrival, his hounding him down, that drives Septimus to his last escape, his suicide. He throws himself out of a window, escapes Holmes's menacing surveillance by killing himself (132).

Septimus is not the only victim of this despotic systematization of thought:

Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalized despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion (89).

The Goddess of proportion worshipped by the doctor has a sister:

Conversion is her name and she feasts on the wills of the weakly, loving to impress, to impose, adoring her own features stamped on the face of the populace (89).

This Goddess 'smites out of her way roughly the dissentient, or dissatisfied' (89). Sir Williams will 'propagate reforms, initiate institutions! But conversion, fastidious Goddess, loves blood better than brick, and feasts most subtly on the human will' (90). The Bradshaws feed on the submission of the defective and feminine. Lady Bradshaw herself is visibly submerged, there is 'the slow sinking, water-logged, of her will into his' (90). She is 'quick to minister to the craving which lit her husband's eye so oilily for dominion, for power' (90).

Clarissa experiences a strong antipathy to Bradshaw when she encounters him at her party;

A man absolutely at the head of his profession, very powerful...He had to decide questions of appalling difficulty. Yet — what she felt was, one wouldn't like Sir William to see one unhappy. No; not that man' (162).

She feels that he is 'obscurely evil...capable of some indescribable outrage — forcing your soul...they make life intolerable, men like that' (164).

Bradshaw preys upon the aberrant, with society and the law firmly behind

him. When Clarissa encounters Bradshaw the doctor is engaged in a discussion of how to deal with the fate of thousands:

Some case Sir William was mentioning, lowering his voice. It had its bearing upon what he was saying about the deferred effects of shell-shock. There must be some provision in the Bill (162).

Sir William is linked to government and the state apparatus. Clarissa's party is given for members of the 'governing classes'. The Prime Minister attends, 'this symbol of what they all stood for, English Society' (153). Against this scene of suppression and coercion the 'discontinuous' and liberated psychic existence of Septimus and Clarissa functions as both a more 'authentic' psychic experience and a defence.

This society identifies itself by, and perpetuates its power through a system of signs and symbols. Clarissa had seen the wielding of an 'icon' effect a passage through 'the populace' for the government car, 'something white, magical, circular, in the footman's hand, a disc inscribed with a name, - the Queen's, the Prince of Wales's, the Prime Minister's?' (17). The car causes great disturbance among the people lining the streets. It is pregnant with untold significance. It might almost contain Kilman's God:

Passers-by, who, of course, stopped and stared, had just time to see a face of the very greatest importance against the dove-grey upholstery, before a male hand drew the blind and there was nothing to be seen except a square of dove-grey (14).

This 'sign', interpreted as a spectre of authority in *Mrs. Dalloway*, induces a response in the watchers which is then magnified in Septimus's reaction. They become subject to an arcane power, mystified by screen of ideological messages. Speculation is rife, people are suspicious, adjust and coordinate, become 'rank and file':

Rumours were at once in circulation...falling indeed with something of a cloud's sudden sobriety and stillness upon faces which a second before had been utterly disorderly. But now mystery had brushed them with her wing; they had heard the voice of authority; the spirit of religion was abroad with her eye bandaged tight and her lips

gaping wide. But nobody knew whose face had been seen (14-15). Septimus interprets the moment as apocalyptic, 'The world has raised its whip; where will it descend?' (15); it has already descended on him, inviting him to his death. Faces are ruffled with 'the same dark breath of veneration' (16). People become still, quiet, and awestruck, chaos is reduced to order, movement to stasis. Something had happened 'in its fullness rather formidable' between the start and finish of a sentence spoken by women in a hat shop (18). The masculine response ('Tall men, men of robust physique, well-dressed men...', 18) to the car is the instinctive perception,

that greatness was passing, and the pale light of the immortal presence fell upon them as it has fallen upon Clarissa Dalloway. As once they stood even straighter...and seemed ready to attend their Sovereign, if need be, to the cannon's mouth, as their ancestors had done before them (18).

Army meets civilian as soldiers are seen marching through the streets, their faces laden with import:

Boys in uniform, carrying guns, marched with their eyes ahead of them, marched, their arms stiff, and on their faces an expression like the letters of a legend written round the base of a statue praising duty, gratitude, fidelity, love of England (47).

The political thrust of the text is realized through the connection of the oppression of femininity with the violation of the human occasioned by patriarchal warfare⁷. Access to meaning production is characterized as essentially masculine:

Lady Bruton often suspended judgement upon men in deference to the mysterious accord in which they, but no woman, stood to the laws of the universe; knew how to put things; knew what was said; so that if Richard advised her, and Hugh wrote for her, she was sure of being somehow right (98).

Mrs. Dalloway happens against an indistinct but compelling projected backdrop of the Great War. Physically and temporally war is removed from

the world of London society, psychically it is omnipresent – the struggle against dark forces of oppression has now to be internally waged. There is a paranoid quality to Woolf's method, to the suggestion of a pandemic presence of restrictive and coercive elements in the world of Clarissa Dalloway. Yet it may be understood as strategic, a loading of the dice in favour of communicating the value and fragility of a new register of experience.

The language that destroys Septimus, that is inscribed on the faces of the soldiers as they march through London, that 'works legs and arms uniformly' while 'life with its varieties, its irreticences, had been laid under a pavement of monuments and wreathes and drugged into a stiff yet staring corpse by discipline' (47) recalls the phrasing employed by Woolf in 'Modern Fiction' to reject more conventional literary concerns and modes of expression. It persists in the rhetoric of psychiatrists who try to tyrannize Septimus back into sanity. This relationship between regimentation and madness is later poignantly exposed when the soldiers are replaced by a group of mental patients that Septimus watches being herded past him through the streets;

a maimed file of lunatics being exercised or displayed for the diversion of the populace (who laughed aloud) ambled and nodded and grinned past him, in the Tottenham Court Road, each half apologetically, yet triumphantly, inflicting his hopeless woe. And would he go mad? (81).

In *A Room of One's Own* Woolf sees a dark shadow lying across a page, obliterating what lies behind it:

It was a straight, dark bar, a shadow shaped something like the letter 'I'. One began dodging this way and that to catch a glimpse of the landscape behind it. Whether that was indeed a tree or a woman walking I was not quite sure...in the shadow of the letter 'I'

all is shapeless as mist (Woolf 1977, 95).

In *Mrs. Dalloway* images of strength and violence, associated with Holmes and Bradshaw, with the straight, dark, shadow of Big Ben² are each in a sense implicated in the obliteration of that landscape, in the grid obscuring the 'under-pattern' and encaging a primary, authentic and in essence feminine consciousness¹⁰.

Schizoid Discontinuity

Septimus's suicidal plunge is psychotic, a casualty of 'discipline', dying impaled on railings. His 'schizoid jottings'¹¹ (Brown 1989, 106) constitute his attempt to 'save the world', his world. He proposes a remedy, a personal alternative to the system that has written him out of 'sanity' and into 'madness'. In *Three Guineas* Woolf hints at her own remedy to the embattled condition of humanity. She expresses to her hypothetical male correspondent the desire to 'discuss with you the capacity of the human spirit to overflow boundaries and make unity out of multiplicity' (Woolf 1938, 260). She declines to elaborate upon her meaning, deeming it inappropriate to a political treatise:

But that would be to dream — to dream the recurring dream that has haunted the human mind since the beginning of time; the dream of peace, the dream of freedom. But, with the sound of guns in your ears you have not asked us to dream. You have not asked us what peace is; you have asked us how to prevent war. Let us then leave it to the poets to tell us what the dream is (ibid., 260).

As a poet she attempts the expression of this dream. Behind the world of post-War London she adumbrates another landscape, 'at midnight, when all boundaries are lost, the country reverts to its ancient shape' (1938, 23). Here the restrictions and prohibitions that create madness out of mindscape are effaced. The text is not a collection of incoherent, absurd

or fantastic 'schizoid jottings', but it operates more as a montage of impressions than as sequential narrative. Woolf promotes a mode of reading which is a registering of a flow of images and signs which remain 'myriad' and disconnected'². The erratic deployment of Septimus's inspired and obscure commentaries further disrupts continuity.

The chimes of Big Ben relentlessly marshal events, coordinate the London social machine, punctuate the narration, call the mind to attention. A network of doctors, legislators, governors and proponents of religious doctrine regulate and schematize meaning and life, distinguish between sanity and insanity, proportion and chaos. This level of reality is composed of the formalities and strain of social encounters, the rigours of government and reverberations of militant ideology; yet it is continuously dismantled, the narrative takes flight, 'Time flaps on the mast. There we stop; there we stand' (Woolf 1976, 45), rooted in a ceaseless psychic present. The text moves into a different dimension, where 'visions ceaselessly float up, pace beside, put their faces in front of, the actual thing' (52).

Septimus's chaotic imaginings flow beneath and across the attempts of doctors to interpret and control them and his wife Rezia's desire to recall him to the coordinates of their life - marriage, children, people, things (he is told to 'take an interest in things outside himself' 21). His delusions and suffering, his 'drowning' (62) in sound, light and memory, in an agonizing internal drama - a 'schizophrenic dispersal' (Minow-Pinkney 1987, 68) - is an exaggerated manifestation of a process of loss of self, of momentary disintegration, which affects others. Peter Walsh experiences 'myriads of things merged in one thing', himself as 'this figure, made of sky and branches' (Woolf 1976, 52), a release from being Peter Walsh

standing alone in Trafalgar Square:

as if inside his brain, by another hand, strings were pulled, shutters moved, and he, having nothing to do with it, yet stood at the opening of endless avenues down which if he chose he might wander...He had escaped! was utterly free - as happens in the downfall of habit when the mind, like an unguarded flame, bows and bends and seems about to blow from its holding (48).

Schizoid narrative articulation manifests itself in a discontinuity where the logic of progression has been displaced by the co-existence of moments, a semi-mystical eclecticism. Narrative voice shifts between minds and memories, noting external phenomena and recording subjective experience. This voice is strung out from Septimus to Peter Walsh, Clarissa, Lady Bruton, the man and woman in the street, the old woman singing at the entrance to the tube station ('a frail quivering sound, a voice bubbling up without direction, vigour, beginning or end' 73). The writing 'I' is dispersed³.

Bradshaw's rigid 'sense of proportion' is exchanged for the graceful flourish and roll of clouds over London, endlessly metamorphosing.

Clarissa's daughter, Elizabeth, watches the sky whilst travelling on a bus:

Signs were interchanged, when, as if to fulfill some scheme arranged already, now a summit dwindled, now a whole block of pyramidal size which had kept its station inalterably advanced into the midst or gravely led the procession to fresh anchorage. Fixed though they seemed at their posts, at rest in perfect unanimity, nothing could be fresher, freer, more sensitive superficially than the snow-white or gold-kindled surface; to change, to go, to dismantle the solemn assemblage was immediately possible; and in spite of the grave fixity, the accumulated robustness and solidity, now they struck light to the earth, now darkness (123).

Suggestions of portentous regulation are replaced by a perception of protean surfaces, discontinuity, depthlessness, evading significance.

Those characters that experience dissociation from a pressing social reality move beyond the boundaries that regulate 'ordinary' experience.

Peter Walsh's visionary moments are triggered by his having lost contact

with his old self, with England, during his stay in India. Clarissa has 'a perpetual sense, as she watched the taxicabs, of being out, out, far out to sea and alone;...She knew nothing; no language, no history; she scarcely read a book now, except memoirs in bed...' (10). For Septimus, 'even Holmes himself could not touch this last relic straying on the edge of the world, this outcast, who gazed back at the inhabited regions, who lay, like a drowned sailor, on the shore of the world' (83)¹⁴.

The text experiments with a discourse of fluid subjectivity. As Minow-Pinkney has suggested:

Woolf's project...becomes a subtle and elegant infraction of the laws of writing, undermining its protocols from within, 'fluctuating' rather than drastically demolishing the fixed positionality of the subject in language (1990, 160).

In *The Modernist Self* Dennis Brown draws upon the work of Woolf and recent feminist criticism to see post-War Modernist literary experimentation as 'part of a revolutionary 'écriture féminine'' (Brown 1989, 179), but poses the question, 'Can we accept such heterogeneity of self-hood without imperilling our sanity?' (ibid., 183). Heterogeneity is represented in *Mrs. Dalloway*, and in recent critical approaches to the text, as akin to 'madness', the disintegration of the self, loss of meaning, but is no closer to psychosis than the homogeneity presented in *Mrs. Dalloway* in the form of the drive for conformity and suppression. 'Schizoid' consciousness is not the other of reason but a language of flight. Madness is not the other of language but another language; not 'madness' then, but as emerges from the structure of this text, the key to a new freedom of expression, a new realism. The mind is kaleidoscopic, the text is an optical toy; through which, nevertheless, important vistas may be discerned.

In *Kafka: A Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guattari create a new context, a different but related perspective, for the discussion of the treatment of madness in Woolf's writing. It is, however, congenial to the expressed aims of Woolf herself. In this work they produce a model for reading Kafka's texts which resists providing explanations and sees the literature instead as a process or a practice, as a 'machine of expression' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 19). Kafka, and the other examples of writers of 'minor' literature, are predominantly male, but there is a sense in which to read Woolf's texts as a 'minor literature' (according to their use of the term) is to the point. Deleuze and Guattari use Joyce and Beckett as examples of Irish writers that 'live within the genial conditions of a minor literature', operating in a relation of 'deterritorialization' to a major language. In their attempt to delineate the attributes of a minor literature they argue:

How many people today live in a language which is not their own? Or no longer, or not yet, even know their own and know poorly the language that they are forced to serve? This is the problem...of minorities, the problem of a minor literature, but also a problem for all of us: how to tear a minor literature away from its own language, allowing it to challenge the language and making it follow a sober revolutionary path? How to become a nomad and an immigrant and a gipsy in relation to one's own language?' (ibid., 19).

Woolf's own position, and that of recent feminist readings of Woolf and her literary fictional project may be understood to situate her as a female writer writing within the 'major' language of patriarchy and patriarchal literary tradition. Approaches such as that of Minow-Pinkney argue that Woolf's condition of double alienation both as woman and woman writer gives rise to her experimentation with a form of writing that is fundamentally subversive 'of the very definitions of narrative, writing, the subject - of a patriarchal social order' (Minow-Pinkney 1987, 10); to which

end she enlists narrative strategies bearing a relation to psychotic patterns of consciousness. Both feminism and modernism, Pinkney argues, 'have a common antagonist; they challenge the dominant, phallogentric mode of discourse and the masculine social order which it underpins' (ibid., 187). This angle would seem to position Woolf's mode of writing as reactive, dependent for its effect upon an awareness of its oppositional placement within the domain of patriarchy but at the same time presaging an alternative female subjectivity which should defeat and supersede that constituted through the paternal order. Minow-Pinkney calls for 'the forging of a new kind of subjectivity' situating Woolf as martyr to the cause (she quotes Kristeva, who sees Woolf 'sinking wordlessly into the river...haunted by voices', ibid., 196).

Minow-Pinkney's point of view is arguably essentialist (she takes on board Kristeva's theory of subjectivity as corrective of essentialist views of language, but in fact appears to carry it in a similar direction), reading Woolf's writing through the writer's femaleness and seeing it as an expression of jeopardy, of the marginalization of female consciousness into madness by the masculinity of language. She views Woolf as straining to 'give voice to the specificity of a female subject who is outside any principle of identity-to-self' (ibid., 83). Woolf's constitutive polemical control and focus in *Mrs. Dalloway* would, however, suggest that such a view is preemptive.

Woolf's modes of writing are not inevitably linked to an essential femaleness, but operate strategically, benefitting from a textual interplay between marginalization and domination. 'Otherness' is essential to her project. Her method is one which exploits, even *demand*s the oppositional impetus to give voice, power and credence to her literary experimentation

with exceptional states of consciousness. Deleuze and Guattari propose that the writer of a minor literature is foreign, the minor author must be 'a sort of stranger *within* his own language' (1986, 26). From this perspective, rather than being confined by its method to an enactment of the condition of a feminine consciousness and a mode of escape from 'paternal government', schizoid narrative functions dynamically, contributing to the emergence of the text as revolutionary and innovative:

A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language...if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility (ibid., 16-17).

Sustaining elements of 'female consciousness', of psychosis, of alienation and marginalization in opposition to a masculine principle should not only be considered as an *expression* of crisis but, with regard to Woolf's deployment of these conditions, as *construction* — enabling the communication of an alternative dimension of experience. Woolf has described the female condition of existing within, and nevertheless feeling radically other to a society, not as a state of entrapment or oppression but as a position of vantage which — once adopted in full awareness — may be critically regenerative:

If one is a woman one is often surprised by a sudden splitting off of consciousness, say in walking down Whitehall, when from being the natural inheritor of that civilization, she becomes, on the contrary, outside of it, alien and critical. Clearly the mind is always altering its focus, and bringing the world into different perspectives (93).

Further, the presentation of the 'masculine' principle in *Mrs. Dalloway* should also be recognized as integral to the text, as construction — as stylized. Woolf's writing becomes perhaps so disconcertingly appropriate to discussion in terms of recent theoretical thought because it speaks the

same lyrical language of dissent, contrives the same implicit narrative, and rather than being the raw material (by virtue apodictically of her final end?) upon which to work is as dialectically astute and creative as these later speculative schematizations'⁴.

How is it then that exceptional psychic experience is redeemed in *Mrs. Dalloway* from the entrapment in silence and psychosis represented in *The Yellow Wallpaper*? The 'dominant phallic position' is shifted from the mean to the brink. The conventional 'masculine' principle of reason, order, restraint, conformity is located at the opposite end of the spectrum to the 'feminine' principle of irrationality, chaos and liberation; both are equally perilous to the full life of the psyche. Space is thereby created for the emergence of an alternative mode of expression not assignable to the realms of psychosis, of a broadly revelatory rather than dysfunctional nature. The text generates an oppressive discourse against which schizoid consciousness is defined. Bradshaw's sanity puts Septimus's insanity into question ('this is madness, this sense...', 89). The text engages in a strategy of inversion, framing a locus that will tolerate or endorse the articulation of exceptional dimensions of experience. *Mrs. Dalloway* presents a historicized, paranoid, patriarchal world taut with the threat of collapse in which entropy is occurring on the level of individual experience. The text attempts to create a literary language for controlled disintegration, to express a 'decentred' self-hood within the context of a generalized epistemic breakdown. Rather than simply presenting a study of the psychosis and near-psychosis of two characters, the text participates in an ongoing psychological validation of 'madness', where sanity and insanity become questionable categories.

DISSOLUTION IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S *THE UNNAMABLE*

Narration and Dissolution

Madness in the work of Samuel Beckett operates in a manner fundamentally distinct from that of the texts so far examined. Specific features of the schizoid state are combined with a dismantling of the mechanisms of narration to produce a radical use of madness that is coterminous with much modern psychological and literary theoretical thought. However, rather than connecting madness (or alternative states of consciousness) with experimental literary concerns in a mutually affirmative manner (as may be said of Woolf), Beckett forges a link between linguistic processes and an ineluctable, dysfunctional state of consciousness more in the manner of a lament than a validation.

Raymond Federman saw Beckett (in 1975) as representative of a new kind of fiction, the creation of which entails each novelist dealing with textual problems involving the abnegation of concepts of 'plot' and 'character'. The writer engages 'in his own individual manner, and with his own madness', with creating 'non-heroes' who move toward a generic condition of 'unnamability' and complete dissociation from any fixed reality (Federman 1981b, 310-11). The social reality that forms a background to the psychic experience of characters in Woolf's work is melted away in *Watt* (finished 1945, published in English in Paris in 1953) and *The Unnamable* (which appeared in French as *L'Innomable* in 1953, and was first published in English in 1959). States analogous to a psychotic condition are, it seems, enlisted in an abrogation of the power of the fictional text to constitute an agent of representation. This analysis attempts to trace

the ways in which these states might induce a paralysis of narrative as a signifying procedure: if this were the basis of what takes place in *Watt*, with regard to the function of madness, *The Unnamable* may be understood to take it from there. 'Where now?' (Beckett 1979, 268), asks the Unnamable. While the text does not address itself to the question of what sanity might be, it remains (for the reader) an indicator of the Unnamable's condition.

This 'condition' in some ways corresponds to predicaments being approached in current theoretical discourse. In literary criticism there has arisen an interest in referring to the works of Samuel Beckett in terms of schizophrenia. Studies such as Barnard's *Samuel Beckett: A New Approach* (1970), and Eileen Watts's analysis, 'Beckett's Unnamables: Schizophrenia, Rationalism and the Novel' (1988) have discussed the part played by schizophrenia in the personalities of his 'heroes'. Barnard suggests that most criticism of Beckett's work fails to deal adequately with the texts in ignoring the part played by schizophrenia (1970, xi), and proposes, for example, that *The Unnamable* is a text which probes into the root causes of schizophrenia through its presentation of a condition of Laingian 'ontological insecurity' (ibid., 66) or the inability to create a stable identity. Barnard's analysis tends toward a realist interpretation of the texts, as studies of insane people, diagnosing their conditions (for example, he says of the trilogy (of which *Watt* is not part) that 'the three novels are a study of alternating or multiple personality involving mania' (ibid., 65). Watts asserts that the three novels in the trilogy, of which *The Unnamable* is the last, conflate Laing's notion of psychosis with an escalation of Cartesian doubt, and 'progressively deteriorate before the reader's eyes as the narratives' madness grows more acute' (1988, 103). In

Fiction of the Modern Grotesque (1989) Bernard McElroy asserts that 'whether by conscious design or by intuition, Beckett has built his novel entirely around the symptoms of schizophrenia' (ibid., 125). McElroy, like Barnard, feels that Beckett must be describing the schizoid state from experience ('the writer's interest in the illness dates back to his visit to Bethlem Royal Hospital and his acquaintance with Lucia Joyce', ibid., 197). To an extent this discussion follows this critical precedent in applying ideas about schizophrenic experience to what Beckett's texts describe. It will also approach those aspects of Beckett's work which are distinctive for their accessibility to such analysis in terms of what is enacted in the two chosen texts on the level, beyond representation, of narration.

There is a continuity between *Watt* and *The Unnamable* residing in a more relentless dissolution of the structure of the text as fiction/narrative than is found in *Watt*. Its foundations are laid by a problematization of narrative voice, of 'plot' or temporality, and of internal connectedness and consistency (including, as Watts suggests, 'a lack of boundaries associated with writing: chapter, paragraph, and sentence boundaries' (1988, 104). Whereas in the other texts dealt with there operates a tension between narrative, narrator and psychosis which *influences* style and structure, and at times moves in the direction of meta-fictional activity, Beckett's treatment of psychosis seems to be founded in, or to emerge out of, a tension between narration, narrative and 'fictions' of subjectivity on a more complex and abstract level.

The encroachment of *délire* upon the process of narration in Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* figured in the narrator's psychological relation to the patterns in the wallpaper, although the narrative cohesion was itself not severely disrupted. In Beckett's texts the focus upon the narrator's

problematized relation to narrative, to the language of story-telling, is not represented figuratively. The language in the text itself more nearly approaches Lecercle's idea of the condition of *délire*:

Délire is a special form of discourse: it is concerned with language, and it is naturally metalinguistic in the same way as literature; it implies a practice of language which is close to its theory (1985, 155).

The articulation of this linguistic and psychological predicament is applicable both in terms of the discursive movements within the two texts, and of the shift between them; like paranoia, *délire* 'is logical, rigorous, internally coherent and based on inferences; it attempts a global interpretation' but if it fails 'the way out is to fall back on schizophrenic discourse, a form of tinkering, *bricolage*, contenting oneself with accounts of limited fields, with fragmentary constructions which do not aim at universal explanatory power' (ibid., 152).

Watt

The narrative in *Watt* follows the physical relocations of the central character, Watt, from his first materialization — apparently comatose — in the middle of a street and the object of public curiosity, to the house of somebody called Mr. Knott, where he appears to undertake domestic work. Another unspecified journey is then described during which time Watt finds himself institutionalized in what appears to be an asylum for the insane. This is roughly the sequence of events, although they are not relayed in a linear fashion. These changes of environment seem to correlate with an internal, mental transformation of Watt. This seems to proceed from a state of social and psychological alienation in the external world, to acute mental disorientation within the walls of Knotts's house, and further

to a condition of increasing disintegration, what have been called 'the clearly discernible effects of schizophrenia' (Di Pierro 1981, 14), a condition in which his world becomes 'unspeakable' (Beckett 1963, 82).

The major part of the narrative describes what happens to Watt in the house of Mr. Knott. An apparently omniscient narrator is attempting to organize Watt's experience significantly. There has been, though, a noticeable reduction of continuity and coherence following the shift in the 'centre of consciousness' occurring early in the text (from Mr. Hackett, an impartial observer of the first discovery of Watt in the street, to that of Watt himself). Further, it is already suggested that there is something strange about Watt, or something indefinite and extraordinary about Watt's experience: he is susceptible to aural hallucinations, hearing 'voices, singing, crying, stating, murmuring, things unintelligible, in his ear'. Watt is fairly familiar with this phenomenon, and so is not 'alarmed, unduly' (Beckett 1963, 27), but the voices do interfere with his perceptions of 'real' events. Watt's eventual arrival at Knott's house is inauspicious, a scene of uncertainty and mystery bathed in an unreal lunar glow:

The chimneys of Mr. Knott's house were visible at last, in the light, of the moon.
The house was in darkness.
Finding the door locked, Watt went to the back door. He could not very well ring, or knock, for the house was in darkness.
Finding the back door locked also, Watt returned to the front door.
Finding the front door locked still, Watt returned to the back door.
Finding the back door now open...Watt was able to enter the house.
Watt was surprised to find the back door, so lately locked, now open.
Two explanations of this occurred to him. The first was this, that his science of the locked door, so seldom at fault, had been so on this occasion, and that the back door, when he had found it locked, had not been locked but open. And the second was this, that the back door...had subsequently been opened from within, or without... (34-5).

The tone here describing the event is objective, but not without

intimations of the uncanny, suggestions of threat and enigma. The house seems to be deserted, but the door is found open under peculiar circumstances. This fact is, however, no more peculiar than Watt's behaviour, and Watt's logic. If he had not expected to discover the door unaccountably opened after first finding it shut, there is no clear reason for his going repetitively back and forth from front to back door. The use of the word 'science' here denotes an habitual and peculiarly intensive application of thought to what in other circumstances might be thought trivial. This hyper-rational procedure is in fact characteristic of Watt's mental behaviour as it is represented by the narrator. (There is a notable ludic or comic element in Watt's confusion which may be understood to be an aspect of a specific feature of schizophrenic discourse, the flattening of emotional affect, an issue to be discussed later on). It correlates with the increasing refusal of events to be easily recognized and understood.

Once ensconced in Knott's house Watt is increasingly less able to reason with effect, to establish beyond doubt the physical coordinates of his experience. Knott's house proves to be the forum for Watt's complete loss of the ability to subdue external phenomena to a coherent reality. Watt's arrival in the house is greeted by a long monologue from a being called Arsene, who is about to leave. Arsene suggests that Watt has taken his place. Arsene himself might, however, be a hallucination'. Watt meanwhile cannot work out whether it might be daytime or night-time. Arsene's narrative relates what has happened to him, and what he supposes is happening to Watt, there being some relation between them as 'men in our situation'. Arsene tells Watt of a significant moment in his life when the order of his world seemed to undergo a subtle but important change:

The change. In what did it consist? It is hard to say. Something slipped...It was a slip like that I felt, that Tuesday afternoon, millions of little things moving all together out of their place, into a new one near by, and furtively, as though it were forbidden. And I have little doubt that I was the only person living to discover them. To conclude from this that the incident was internal would, I think, be rash. For my — how shall I say? — my personal system was so distended at that period of which I speak that the distinction between what was inside it and what was outside it was not at all easy to draw. Everything that happened happened inside it, and at the same time everything that happened happened outside it. I trust I make myself plain. I did not, need I add, see the thing happen, nor hear it, but I perceived it (41-2).

Arsene believes that 'what was changed was existence off the ladder', the reality beyond the series of questions and answers, the process of reasoning, by which 'with patience, it would be an easy matter to extract the next in order, and so descend, so mount, rung by rung, until the night was over' (43). That the change of state was real, Arsene is sure, but not sure in what sense,

in my opinion it was not an illusion, as long as it lasted, that presence of what did not exist, that present without, that present within, that presence between, though I'll be buggered if I can understand how it could have been anything else (43).

Everything experienced by Watt in Knott's house becomes similarly problematic and enigmatic:

Watt now found himself in the midst of things which, if they consented to be named, did so as it were with reluctance. And the state in which Watt found himself resisted formulation in a way no state had ever done, in which Watt had ever found himself, and Watt had found himself in a great many states (78).

A series of enigmatic events and objects of a hallucinatory nature become the focus of Watt's attention, and of his logical faculties. The incident of the piano tuners' visit ('Mr. Gall Senior and Mr. Gall Junior') to the house 'in a sense...resembled all the incidents of note proposed to Watt during his stay in Mr. Knott's house' (69). It is remarkable, but also typical, for its dubious quality of not having happened, very noticeably,

with no discernable concrete meaning, 'a thing that was nothing had happened with the utmost formal distinctness, and...continued to happen, in his mind, he supposed, though he did not know exactly what that meant, and though it seemed to be outside him, before him, about him, and so on' (73). It resembles other events 'in the vigour with which it developed a purely plastic content, and gradually lost, in the nice processes of its light, its sound, its impacts and its rhythm, all meaning, even the most literal' (69).

The event

ceased very soon to signify for Watt piano tuned, an obscure family and professional relation, an exchange of judgements more or less intelligible, and so on, if indeed it had ever signified such things, and became a mere example of light commenting bodies, and stillness motion, and silence sound, and comment comment (69-70).

(This movement of disintegration of significance, of presence, will also prove to be prototypical of the fluctuations of narrative discourse in *The Unnamable*). Watt's confusion, his inability to distinguish between the nature of one event and another, to perceive things objectively, to place himself securely in relation to events in space and time gives rise to a compulsive thought process through which he tries to understand and reformulate events. The 'fragility of the outer meaning had a bad effect on Watt, for it caused him to seek for another' (70). Likewise with each occasion, Watt is

obliged, because of his peculiar character, to enquire into what they meant, oh not into what they really meant, his character was not so peculiar as all that, but into what they might be induced to mean, with the help of a little patience, a little ingenuity (72).

The narrative becomes more a description or representation of this process than of any series of 'actual' events. Watt's deliberations on Mr. Knott's eating habits and on what is supposed to happen to the uneaten food that he collects after Knott has left the table sustain a considerable portion

of narrative². By so doing, Watt is also reasoning Knott (whom he is never certain of having seen, 'not that Watt was ever to have any direct dealings with Mr. Knott, for he was not') into existence as perhaps, the 'author of a final solution' (91) who eventually 'choses' from among the many elaborate alternatives that Watt could imagine.

Watt's discourse approaches Lecercle's concept of *délire* here in that he believes his thought process is as far as possible in the circumstances 'logical, rigorous, internally coherent'. It is also 'based on inferences; it attempts a global interpretation': without any knowledge of Knott Watt infers that such a being is at the hub of this intractable realm, and infers from *this* that there must therefore be an order behind it if only he can conceive of the nature of its operation, and in the process of such deliberation he is able once more to infer Knott's existence (like *proofs* for the existence of God). However, Watt does not succeed in convincing himself of the actuality of any system he construes, and at intervals the narrative collapses into,

tinkering, *bricolage*, contenting oneself with accounts of limited fields, with fragmentary constructions which do not aim at universal explanatory power (Lecercle 1985, 152).

The relations between 'such series as these, the series of dogs, the series of men, the series of pictures, to mention only these series...' (135) never cohere into a unifiable structure. They are dealt with exhaustively within a very narrow focus. Watt considers,

not only some of those solutions that had not apparently prevailed, but also some of those objections that were perhaps the cause of their not having done so, distributed as follows:

Solution							Number of Objections	
1st	2
2nd	3
3rd	4
4th	5

...Passing on then to the solution that seemed to have prevailed, Watt found it to be roughly this, that a suitable local dog-owner, that is

to say a needy man with a famished dog, should be sought out (94-95) Watt is not successful in his paranoid 'decoding' and re-formulation of experience. System and frame, which could be provided by 'Knott's house', disintegrate as Knott himself proves to be a central and significant absence, an indeterminable entity. Watt's reasoning dissolves into endless and monotonous fabrication and bricolage. What is made in his mind, though shifting and hallucinatory, has as much or as little meaning for him as anything he can suspect has actually happened outside of his head.

However, the narrative continues to be articulated in the third person, functioning as an external perspective on what goes on in Watt's head. The question arises as to why the narrative, the signified of which is the story of what happens to Watt — a character who seems to be psychotic — does not appear to be impermeable to Watt's confusion. On the contrary, it is increasingly caught up in repeating the delirious tangle of Watt's thought processes. It ceases to be a 'narrative', not succeeding in operating in communicating a sequence of events, strung together on a thread of cause and effect.

Something has taken place in the process of narrating, or has occurred at the level of a determining narrative instance². This becomes clear at an advanced stage in the text. There is a shift from an apparently omniscient narrator to a narrator as character. Chapter III begins, 'It was about this time that Watt was transferred to another pavilion' (149). The narrator refers to himself as Sam and explains at length the nature of his encounters with Watt. It becomes evident that the narrative is a re-construction, from Watt's personal reconstruction, as relayed by Watt to Sam in an asylum. However, Watt's powers of narration are constantly dwindling. Watt's practice of supplying proliferating

hypothesis renders the act of transcription farcical. It becomes more a question of process, of narration than narrative.

Watt's mental abnormality seems to be the missing link between the act of narrating and the construction of a stable narrative. Narrating as an organizational and referential activity is considered problematic by Sam, because there is no way of getting past Watt, and Sam is attempting a faithful rendition of Watt's tale.

And if Watt had not known this, that Erskine's key was not a simple key, then I should never have known it either, nor the world. For all that I know on the subject of Mr. Knott, and of all that touched Mr. Knott, and on the subject of Watt, and of all that touched Watt, came from Watt, and from Watt alone. And if I do not appear to know very much on the subject of Mr. Knott and of Watt, and on the subject of all that touched them, it is because Watt did not know a great deal on these subjects... This does not mean that Watt may not have left out some of the things that happened, or that were, or that he may not have foisted in other things that never happened, or never were. Mention has already been made of the difficulties that Watt encountered in his efforts to distinguish between what happened and what did not happen, between what was and what was not, in Mr. Knott's house. And Watt made no secret of this (124).

Sam faces difficulty in that Watt's notion of time has abandoned him, 'As it turned out, Watt was never to know how long he spent in Mr. Knott's house, how long on the ground floor, how long on the first floor, how long altogether. All he could say was that it seemed a long time' (134). Sam also professes himself quite unable to penetrate Watt's mental and verbal constructions to the truth of what took place:

Watt considered, with reason, that he was successful, in this enterprise, when he could evolve, from the meticulous phantoms that beset him, a hypothesis proper to disperse them, as often as this might be found necessary. There was nothing, in this operation, at variance with Watt's habits of mind. For to explain had always been to exorcize, for Watt. And he considered that he was unsuccessful, when he failed to do so. And he considered that he was neither wholly successful, nor wholly unsuccessful, when the hypothesis evolved lost its virtue, after one or two applications, and had to be replaced by another, which in due course ceased to be of the least assistance, and so on. And that is what happened in the majority of cases. Now to give examples of Watt's failures, and of Watt's successes, and of Watt's partial successes, in this connexion, is so

to speak impossible. For when he speaks, for example, of the Gall's father and son, does he speak of it in terms of the unique hypothesis that was required, to deal with it, and render it innocuous, or in terms of the latest, or in terms of some other kind of series?...one is sometimes tempted to wonder, with reference to two or even three incidents related by Watt as separate and distinct, if they are not in reality the same incident, variously interpreted (74).

Watt is also, according to Sam, unable to control language in a manner that would facilitate narration. Watt speaks 'in short and isolated phrases, or fragments of phrases, separated by considerable periods of time from one another....' (117). Sam seems to report all characters as speaking deliriously, because he cannot distinguish their words from Watt's manner of reportage:

that there ever issued from the mouth of man, or ever shall again, except in moments of delirium, or during the service for the mass, a voice at once so rapid and so low, is hard to believe. Watt spoke also with scant regard for grammar, for syntax, for pronunciation, enunciation, and very likely, if the truth were known, for spelling too, as these are generally received. Proper names, however, both of places and of persons, such as Knott, Christ, Gomorrha, Cork, he articulated with great deliberation.

Knott also talks like Watt;

Mr. Knott often talked to himself too, with great variety and vehemence of intonation and gesticulation, but this so softly that it came, a wild dim chatter, meaningless to Watt's ailing ears (208).

As Sam declares his difficulties with Watt's communications, Sam's discourse is itself rendered doubtful.

Watt spoke as one speaking to dictation, or reciting, parrot-like, a text, by long repetition become familiar. Of this impetuous murmur much fell in vain on my imperfect hearing and understanding, and much by the rushing wind was carried away, and lost forever (154).

Sam suspects that this is how he missed much 'of great interest touching I suspect the second stage of the second or closing period of Watt's stay in Mr, Knott's house' (163), but asserts elsewhere, 'Watt had little to say on the second or closing period of his stay in Mr, Knott's house', and 'in the course of the second or closing period of Watt's stay in Mr, Knott's house,

the information acquired by Watt, on that subject, was scant' (199). Watt's voice, like Knott's voice, has all the characteristics of a hallucinatory 'inner voice', such as Watt is supposed to hear, 'stating, murmuring, things unintelligible' (27). The narrative voice becomes identifiable with a verbal hallucination, disembodied, delirious, invading Sam's disturbed consciousness.

If, at some points, he has been unable to make anything of Watt's language, then it seems that Sam has substituted and supplemented Watt's narrative in an equally extravagant manner. Watt had

wondered what Arsene had said, on the evening of his departure. For his declaration had entered Watt's ears only by fits, hardly at all. He had realized to be sure, that Arsene was speaking, and in a sense to him, but something had prevented him, perhaps his fatigue, from paying attention to what was being said and from enquiring into what was being meant (77).

Sam's account becomes indistinguishable from Watt's account, not because it is a facsimile, but because both are defective, insubstantial, and fragmentary.

The sifting of the referent through the disrupted and parthenogenic percipience of two institutionalized characters enacts the dissolution of the relation between descriptive language and reality. The fact that the narrative fails to maintain a stable signified is the effect of a rupture of the relation between signified and signifier in the mental apparatus of Watt and Sam. Whereas, in the paranoid texts, there might be several narrators each providing a different perspective upon the same sequence of events — creating the challenge to re-accomplish a stable objective reality — there are in this text two narrators producing proliferating accounts of an unknown sequence of events — playing verbal havoc with both subjectivity and objectivity. In the same way as Watt perceives that the

pot is not a true pot, the narrative is not a 'true' narrative:

It was just this hairbreadth departure from the nature of a true pot that so excruciated Watt. For if the approximation had been less close, then Watt would have been less anguished. For then he would not have said, This is a pot, and yet not a pot, no, but then he would have said, This is something of which I do not know the name (78).

What seems to have happened is that 'little by little, a disturbance [has been turned] into words...' (114-5). Watt, as Hugh Culik proposes⁴ seems to collapse 'into an institutionalized aphasic condition after losing faith in the ability of words to control reality' (1983, 65). This condition is not only characteristic of Watt's speech, but, occasionally and unavoidably, of the text itself, both exhibiting, to borrow Barnard's terminology, 'perfectly sound examples of schizophrenic speech disorders' (1970, 24).

The presence of Watt and Sam might be said finally to be the elements that knit the text together, but just as Watt's recognition that the pot is not quite a pot leads him to the suspicion that he is not quite a self ('of himself he could no longer affirm anything that did not seem as false', Beckett 1963, 79), there is a domino effect in the text that eliminates both Watt, Sam, and every other character as a discrete, reliable centre of consciousness. Sam walks 'glued' to Watt (167), Watt becomes physically entangled with Sam, Watt is quite possibly a hallucination or alter-ego of Sam's. Everybody is possibly insane: 'Or was Erskine out of his mind? And he himself Watt, was he not perhaps slightly deranged? And Mr. Knott himself, was he quite right in his head? Were they not all three perhaps a little off the hooks?' (120). This propagation of identities is an abstracted and passive affair, in contrast to instances of paranoid doubling and projection in the earlier texts. The words 'Watt' and 'Knott' are too linguistically homophonic and nonsense-like to perform

adequately as names (What is Watt? What is what? What is Knott? Watt is not. What is not? What is...the relationship between object and object, signifier and signified? Is Watt/what is, that which can pin down the chain of signifiers by being identical with his name?), and they are without the reassuring familiarity of the name Sam. But perhaps Sam, when combined with the name 'Hackett' (the character that disappears after the discovery of Watt in the beginning), has an over-familiar ring. It seems that, as Federman said 'fiction, as exemplified in this novel, is made to become the product of a deranged mind' (1965, 110), but the question is 'whose?'. Narrative, as a signifying discourse, has in *Watt* been transformed. Syntagmatic cohesion has been disrupted, its logic parodied. The activity of narration sustains itself overall however, within a fragile *semblance* of coherence, in default of the mad narrators and narrative chaos.

Just as Sam — the ostensible narrator — and Watt — the apparent protagonist — pace around the grounds of the asylum 'glued' together, the relation of the text to the psychotic states it describes becomes indissoluble. In contrast to the paranoid texts Sam's testimony does not function as a frame, objectifying Watt's experience, but very subtly begins to loosen and dissolve the narrative texture, exposing the delusionary component of the narration. Textual disorientation echoes Watt's experience. The narrator speculates about Watt speculating, about the refusal of words to have much to do with things and of external reality to conform to his endless hypothesizing. Watt's accelerating paralogical thought processes, and loss of capacity to stabilize anything (manifest in contradiction, repetition, inconsistency, compulsive thinking in the

Schreberesque sense) initiate textual decomposition, which is not dissipated by the imposition of narratorial control. Disruptive discourse at intervals becomes heavily patterned, for example:

He moved, to and fro, from the door to the window, from the window to the door; from the window to the door, from the door to the window; from the fire to the bed, from the bed to the fire; from the bed to the fire, from the fire to the bed...(203)

It articulates a paranoid mania for order at this level, but the whole falls apart, becoming an insistent bricolage of 'virtual' narrative.

The world of the text is, in a sense, gothic and fantastic: the laws governing this world are uncertain, aporia hangs on every event and circumstance, the instability of phenomena is persecutory. However, because there is no working up of a recognition of any object or event as extraordinary *in relation to* any other, only in its own quintessentiality, the paranoid dynamic is disabled. This world becomes an arena for schizoid dissolution both on the level of what the text describes (narrative) and of the text as a process of narration.

The Unnamable

It is possible to trace, to a limited extent, the movement of Watt through space and time, to understand *Watt* both as a narrative of what happens to a character, and as a narrative of the difficult process of narrating that narrative. (Sam explains, for example, 'As Watt told the beginning of his story, not first, but second, so not fourth, but third, now he told its end. Two, one, four, three, that was the order in which Watt told his story...' 214). *The Unnamable* is not accessible to such reformulation. There is no sustained concession to plot, no action, no continuous narrative to piece together. It does not, like *Watt*, deal with a man's struggle with language,

but, as Maire Jaanus Kurrik suggests, 'The plot of *The Unnamable* is language's war against itself' (1979, 227).

Watt's world in Knott's house becomes 'unspeakable', or perhaps finally speakable only in terms of what might be called a schizoid discourse. 'Knott's house' is in a sense a figure for the situation of the Unnamable. 'That Mr. Knott might never cease, but ever almost cease. Such appeared the arrangement...' (Beckett 1963, 203), and such appears to be the arrangement for the voice of the *Unnamable*. The text, as the title implies, focusses again upon the recalcitrance of language. There are no pots here to challenge subjective perception and stability. The subject, the percipient, is in a state of continuous dispersal. The Unnamable 'is not', and is not nameable, existing as an ongoing negation, or present only as that which cannot be spoken of, that which the text continues (to abuse by) not-speaking-of.

The Unnamable speaks of 'the madness of having to speak' (Beckett 1979, 297), when nothing and nobody is there to be spoken. The dissociation of word from thing set in motion in *Watt* as an observable process crystallizes out here into a condition. The text functions as an exposé of this condition. Language is demonstrated to be both autonomous and persecutory. It is devoid of a stable relation to mind or matter, and unable to bridge the gap between them. The subject disperses and a voice or voices continue to speak, in an eternal, torturous present: 'Ah if only this voice could stop, this meaningless voice which prevents you from being nothing and nowhere, just enough to keep alight this little yellow flame' (341). The image echoes that in Dante's *Inferno* (canto xxvi), where the character of Ulysses speaks from a cloven flame, condemned to the realm of the false counsellors. He tells his story: he voyaged in search

of experience, 'virtute e canoscenza', which culminates in a 'folle volo' - a mad flight to destruction. This realm of Hell is peopled with spirits imprisoned in flames (Dante 1939, 321-327, I). Beckett is known to have been interested in *The Divine Comedy* (to which *More Pricks Than Kicks*, for example, bears witness⁵). The voice of *The Unnamable* expresses, if nothing else, complete isolation and dissociation, frequently referring to his situation as a state of damnation; there is for *The Unnamable*, 'Nothing to do but stretch out comfortably on the rack, in the blissful knowledge you are nobody for all eternity. A pity I should have to give tongue at the same time' (311).

The text traces not so much a struggle against the process of breakdown, like *Watt*, but a final dwindling: 'I have dwindled, I dwindle' (1979, 304). *The Unnamable* is suspended in a species of pre-birth, or as Barnard says 'post-mortem' limbo, where the narrative coordinates that give a subject existence (syntagmatic logic, location in time and space) are ineffectually articulated. The process of narration in the text is subject to a constant form of erasure: the narrative instance is abortive, the narrator - the person whose utterance constitutes the narrative - is manifestly both incapable of utterance and a non-person, experiencing alienation from both selfhood and language. He is unable to find himself in the utterance of 'I'.

The text begins 'Where now? Who now? When now? Unquestioning, I, say I. Unbelieving. Questions, hypotheses, call them that. Keep going...' (1979, 267). It is a quest for the significance and validity of such questions, untethered as they are and not issuing from any centre of meaning, any presence. The whole may be seen as an interrogative signifier, of which the signified is lost. First person and utterance are

severed:

This voice that speaks...I'll ask no more questions, there are no more questions, I know none any more. It issues from me, it clamours against my walls, it is not mine, I can't stop it, I can't prevent it, from tearing me, racking me, assailing me. It is not mine, I have none (281).

Yet the struggle to identify who is occupying the space, from which the voice issues, paradoxically and compulsively continues. It is manifest in The Unnamable's attempts to substantiate his presence, in unsatisfactory forays into narrative descriptions of the situation of the speaker/hearer. Operating in the present tense the language communicates simultaneously the fluctuating and obscure perceptions of the Unnamable, but cannot express awareness of past or future ('I am incapable...of measuring time' 274, 'I resume, years later, meaning I suppose that I went silent, that I can go silent. And now this noise again. That is all rather obscure. I say years, though here there are no years' 283, 'when you have nothing left to say you talk of time, seconds of time, there are some people add them together to make a life, I can't, each one is the first, no, the second, or the third, I'm three seconds old, oh not every day of the week...', 364).

Likewise, though there are attempts at describing spatial dimensions, they are vague and without perception of a fixed external reality, everything is continually in motion, shifting, emptied of significance (as things for Watt 'became a mere example of light commenting bodies, and stillness motion, and silence sound, and comment comment', Beckett 1963, 70). Images of characters (including those from other texts, Murphy, Molloy and Malone) revolve around each other, whilst the Unnamable likes to think, 'I occupy the centre, but nothing could be less certain' (Beckett 1979, 270). The Unnamable attempts unsuccessfully to position himself (the assumption of masculinity here is consistent with the Unnamable's

shifts into the pronoun 'he') in relation to external phenomena, 'my seat would appear to be somewhat elevated', 'I only see what appears close beside me'. Yet everything is 'murky', only half-perceived and indeterminate, two-dimensional. The only factors signalling consciousness are alternations of lights with dark, apparitions and disappearances. There is nothing there to measure or to reason with, no absent or present, no past or future, no inside and outside, self and other, only assertion and negation, 'alone, in the unthinkable unspeakable, where I have not ceased to be, where they will not let me be...' (307).

The physical existence of the Unnamable is, for him, a matter of debate, 'being incapable of seeing, moving, thinking, speaking...'; The Unnamable expresses alienation and disorientation with regard to his physical being. He is not sure whether he is in fact located inside 'a' head, the whole mindscape being the 'inside of my distant skull where once I wandered, now am fixed, lost for tininess, or straining against the walls, with my head, my hands...' (277). He also speaks of being,

in my head, which I am beginning to locate to my satisfaction, above and a little to the right' but sometimes convinces himself of being secured in this skull, 'I say to myself I am in a head, it's terror makes me say it, and the longing to be in safety, surrounded on all sides by massive bone (322).

Positions and shapes are created, 'I know I am seated, my hands on my knees, because of the pressure against my rump' (279), 'my spine is not supported. I mention these details to make sure I am not lying on my back...', 'were it not for the distant testimony of my palms, my soles, which I have not been able to quash, I would gladly give myself the shape, if not the consistency, of an egg' (279). None of these efforts are invested with conviction and each is negated by further attempts at self-location.

The attempt to discover the being, the physical agent, behind the

voice(s) also gives rise to an activity of self-conscious fictionalization. The voice propagates a series of signifieds for the 'I', which first emerge couched in the third person, radically other than the speaker, and which then merge into the first person. An entity named Basil erupts into the discourse, 'usurping my name' (273). Basil is later renamed 'Mahood',

Decidedly Basil is becoming important, I'll call him Mahood instead, I prefer that, I'm queer. It was he told me stories about me, lived in my stead, issued forth from me, came back to me, entered back into me, heaped stories on my head. I don't know how it was done (283).

These names become autonomous physical agents, proliferating and disintegrating in fragmentary narratives (or are fictions borrowed from other narratives: Malone, Molloy, Murphy 268, Mercier-Camier 272) that usurp both the voice and the consciousness of the Unnamable. They become both the narrators and protagonists of their own stories. Mahood 'speaks through' the Unnamable in the third person (and the Unnamable speaks through Mahood in the first person). Mahood becomes involved in a series of stories, also referred to as lies. The story of his 'homecoming', of Mahood as a traveller with a past, with a future, with a family (but like a doomed and broken Ulysses), absorbs the Unnamable's attention at considerable length. The tale is grotesque, surreal, nonsensical:

At the particular moment I am referring to, I mean when I took myself for Mahood, I must have been coming to the end of a world tour, perhaps not more than two or three centuries ago. My state of decay lends colour to this view, perhaps I had left my leg behind in the Pacific...In a word I was returning to the fold, admittedly reduced, and doubtless fated to be even more so, before I could be restored to my wife and parents, you know, my loved ones...I found myself in a kind of vast yard or campus, surrounded by high walls, its surface an amalgam of dirt and ashes, and this seemed sweet to me after the vast and heaving wastes I had traversed, if my information is correct...(291).

The voice offers a meticulous account of the tediously slow arrival of the crippled figure, lasting many years, to where his large family await him in

a small building at the end of this enclosure. The Unnamable remarks of the creation of a family, 'That's one of Mahood's favourite tricks, to produce ostensibly independent testimony in support of my historical existence' (292). He wonders whether he 'is required' to admit

that I am Mahood after all and these stories of a being whose identity he usurps, and whose voice he prevents from being heard, all lies from beginning to end...(285).

Finally the Unnamable proposes the termination of Mahood's voice, but even this is doomed to futility in his predicament:

The stories of Mahood are ended. He has realized they could not be about me, he has abandoned, it is I who win, who tried so hard to lose, in order to please him...sometimes I forget, that all is a question of voices. I say what I am told to say, in the hope that some day they will weary of talking at me. The trouble is I say it wrong, having no ear, no head, no memory (317).

Having no sense of time passing, the Unnamable later wonders whether he has discussed Mahood at all:

I must have talked about him, the same words recur and they are your memories. It is I invented him, him and so many others, and the places where they passed, the places where they stayed, in order to speak, since I had to speak, without speaking of me, I couldn't speak of me, I was never told I had to speak of me, I invented my memories... (364).

Worm is another persona, usurping Mahood ('Worm, I nearly said Watt, Worm, what can I say of Worm, who hasn't the wit to make himself plain...' 311) promising more authentic expression but barely existing, the least vocal of them all.

The Unnamable has to use language, or be used by language, 'I have to speak, whatever that means. Having nothing to say, no words but the words of others, I have to speak. No one compels me to, there is no one, it's an accident, a fact' (288). He is immured, buried alive in alien utterance,

I am walled around with their vociferations, none will ever know what I am, none will ever hear me say it, I won't say it, I can't say it, I

have no language but theirs (299).

No matter how many persons there are; how many names they may have, they are all in the end pseudonyms; 'I knew it, there might be a hundred of us and still we'd lack the hundred and first, we'll always be short of me'

(311). The voice of the Unnamable becomes involved in a reflexive discourse considering the linguistic and fictional possibilities of its own being:

But enough of this cursed first person, it is really too red a herring, I'll get out of my depth if I'm not careful. But what is the subject? Mahood? No, not yet. Worm? Even less. Bah, any old pronoun will do, provided one sees through it. Matter of habit. To be adjusted later, Where was I? (315).

The validity of such questions is itself questioned, 'How many of us are there altogether, finally? And who is holding forth at the moment? And to whom? And about what? These are futile teasers' (339). Distinctions between pronouns are eventually demolished:

Someone speaks, someone hears, no need to go any further, it is not he, it's I, or another, or others, what does it matter, the case is clear, it is not he, he who I know I am, that's all I know, who I cannot say I am... (370).

They are recognized as mere mendacious narrative devices, use in any case to create a series of madmen. The Unnamable 'succeeds in catching',

without ceasing an instant to emit my he said, and he said to himself, and he asked, and he answered, a certain number of highly promising formulae and which indeed I promised myself to turn to good account at the first opportunity, that is to say as soon as I had finished with my troop of lunatics (282).

The Unnamable proposes to abandon these ciphers, but cannot abandon the madness, the persecution by continual self-negation in every act of self-affirmation ('affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered, or sooner or later' 267), self-expression:

Its of me now I must speak, even if I have to do it with their language, it will be a start, a step towards silence and the end of madness, the madness of having to speak and not being able to, except

of things that don't concern me, that don't count, that I don't believe, that they have crammed me full of to prevent me from saying who I am, where I am, and from doing what I have to do in the only way that can put an end to it...But I'll fix their gibberish for them. I never understood a word of it in any case, not a word of the stories it spews...it's entirely a matter of voices, no other metaphor is appropriate (297).

Viewing Beckett's *The Unnamable* in terms of schizoid narration rests on the premise that the text involves the dismantling of some form of coherent narration. As the preceding passage suggests, this dismantling can be said to be initiated by a schizoid narrative instance, that is to say, the primary failure of continuity between the narrator and the narration, the 'speaker' and the utterance. In *Philosophy through the Looking Glass* Jean-Jacques Lecercle proposes;

Poetry is a recording of experience, a new experience of language and of the world, whereas delirium is mere repetition, in which the subject is possessed by language (1985, 120).

As the the Unnamable reflects, 'It all boils down to a question of words...';

A parrot, that's what they're up against, a parrot. If they told me what I have to say, in order to meet with their approval, I'd be bound to say it, sooner or later (Beckett 1979, 308).

The Unnamable is not in this sense a poem, the Unnamable a poet, or the text a 'poetic' text. The narrator is not a living Ulysses, expressing a passion to 'gain experience of the world' ('l'ardore ch'i'ebbi a devinir del mondo esperto' xxvi, Dante 1939, 97), but a destroyed Ulysses, sunk deep in hell, forever exiled from self ('the one they foisted on me, up there in their world', Beckett 1979, 273) from experience, from *canoscenza*, 'Can it be that I am the prey of a genuine preoccupation, of a need to know as one might say? I don't know'. The world in which the Unnamable exists is not knowable, is not consistent or continuous; it is a condition of uncertainty, 'If one day a change were to take place, resulting from a principle of disorder already present, or on its way, what then?' (270).

There is no guarantee from one moment to the next that the flow of words refers to anything beyond itself. *The Unnamable* is a linguistic performance enacting the event of linguistic performance as a non-event.

The text demonstrates a schizoid perception of language as automatic - an 'uncanny' noise made by an automaton, a being composed of mechanical parts:

Strange, these phrases that die for no reason, strange, what's strange about it, here all is strange, all is strange when you come to think of it, no, it's coming to think of it that is strange, am I to suppose I am inhabited (371).

In psychiatry there is an argument whether, in a chicken-or-egg fashion, thought disorder gives rise to language disorder or vice-versa, as Rochester and Martin point out in *Crazy Talk: A Study of the Discourse of Schizophrenic Speakers* (1979)⁶, but it can be said that with regard to *The Unnamable*, availing itself as it does of metafictional strategies, language is the creator and destroyer of both the continuity and differentiation between the self, the world, and reality. Federman decides in *Journey to Chaos* that, 'Beckett seems to suggest that fiction emerges from a state of insanity' (1965, 97). Whether it involves a deployment of language in an examination of its function as the origin of a philosophical and linguistic predicament, or as a representation of an ontological problematic inherent in the act of fabrication⁷, the text realizes an experience which might be called schizoid in its focus on ensnarement and dissolution in the mechanics of language. There are disjunctions, separations, abscissions at every level: between mind and body, thought and language, body and language, subject and narrative, narrator and utterance. How,

in such conditions', asks the Unnamable, 'can I write, to consider only the manual aspect of that bitter folly? I don't know. I could know. But I shall not know. Not this time. It is I who write, who cannot raise my hand from my knee (Beckett 1979, 276).

A salient aspect of the stories told by the voices in *The Unnamable* relates to a further level of discontinuity that is again analogous to what can be described as a schizoid condition. The narratives describe isolation, horror, death and dying, mutilation, exhaustion, situations that must be understood to give rise to suffering. Yet the narration does not register any such appropriate response. The writing manifests a 'flattening of affect'; the severance of word from thing is repeated in the disjuncture between self and experience. When Mahood relates his endless route home, and discovers that his relatives are, meanwhile, dying, he says:

As for the screams of pain and wafts of decomposition, assuming I was capable of noticing them, they would have seemed to me quite in the natural order of things, such as I had come to know it...(295).

He talks of the poison that had 'exterminated my entire kith and kin' as something 'I could readily admit, but only on condition that my personal behaviour had not to suffer by it' (296). A different tale gives rise to the announcement of emotional dereliction, originating in a loss of self and sense of absolute futility:

They say I suffer like true thinking flesh, but I'm sorry, I feel nothing. Mahood I felt a little, now and then, but what good did that do them? No, they'd be better advised to try something else. I felt the cang, the flies, the sawdust under my stumps, the tarpaulin on my skull, when they were mentioned to me. But can that be called a life which vanishes when the subject is changed?...They want me to have a mind where it is known once and for all that I have a pain in the neck, that flies are devouring me and that the heavens can do nothing to help (325).

The Unnamable laments the fact that he does not seem to have a face, as if to have a face to register emotional affect would be the answer to his inability to feel, and thus he would be assured of his existence. He is 'nothing but a shapeless heap, without a face capable of reflecting the niceties of a torment' (328):

A face, how encouraging that would be. If it could be a face, every now and then, always the same, methodically varying its expressions,

doggedly demonstrating all a true face can do, without ever ceasing to be recognizable as such, passing from unmixed joy to the sullen fixity of marble, via the most characteristic shades of disenchantment, how pleasant that would be (333).

In her case study of a schizophrenic woman Marion Milner describes the ongoing sensation experienced by her patient of having 'no face' as linked to loss of identity. She is told that the woman 'has not had a face for five years'. Having no face was part of 'having no boundary, so that she could feel herself spreading out to include everything, be everthing without any limits; but this, she feels, could also mean being nothing' (Milner 1969, 127). The dissolution or 'dwindling' of the anguished speaking 'I' into many different voices, and then simply into language in *The Unnamable* is also described in terms of entropy, of a physical dispersal:

No need of a mouth, the words are everywhere, inside me, outside me, well well, a minute ago I had no thickness, I hear them, no need to hear them, no need of a head, impossible to stop them, impossible to stop, I'm in words, made of words, others' words, what others, the place too, the air, the walls, the floor, the ceiling, all words, the whole world is here with me, I'm the air, the walls...I'm all these words, all these strangers, this dust of words, with no ground for their settling, no sky for their dispersing (Beckett 1979, 356).

This results in a desire for imprisonment, for containment, for walls ('a cell would be plenty' 377), like the walls of the skull; but these walls are incomplete - perhaps he has no face, perhaps he has only a face, like Milner's patient, with nothing behind it, 'perhaps that's what I am, the thing that divides the world in two, on the one side the outside, on the other the inside...' (352).

The recognized counterpart of flattening of affect, of dissociation from sensation⁶, is continuous weeping⁷. Perhaps the most explicit and distinct information offered concerning the (non)entity known as the Unnamable is that he weeps, continuously. This is noted repeatedly at

intervals throughout the text⁹:

The tears stream down my cheeks from my unblinking eyes. What makes me weep so? From time to time. There is nothing saddening here. Perhaps it is liquefied brain. Past happiness in any case has clean gone from my memory, assuming it was ever there...Nothing ever troubles me. And yet I am troubled (269).

'If only I were alive inside...', he complains, and proposes, 'I know my eyes are open, because of the tears that pour from them unceasingly'. The sound of crying bears no relation to the body of the utterer:

So after a long period of immaculate silence a feeble cry was heard, by me. I do not know if Malone heard it too. I was suprised, the word is not too strong. After so long a silence a little cry, stifled outright. What kind of creature uttered it and, if it is the same, still does from time to time? impossible to say. Not a human one in any case, there are no human creatures here, or if there are they have done with crying (271).

The Unnamable convinces himself that he has the power to stop the tears, to be simply a talking machine, immune to the torment of 'not-being' ('being Knott'), 'I'll dry these streaming sockets too, bung them up, there, it's done, no more tears, I'm a big talking ball, talking about things that do not exist, or that exist perhaps, impossible to know' (280). Yet he can never fully create this mechanistic consciousness.

Schizoid Textuality

In terms of loss of unitary identity, linguistic *délire*, and the lack of continuity between experience and sentiment, this 'fictional' text mimics focal mechanisms and diagnostic criteria of schizophrenia. Beckett's (anti) narrative technique has meant meanwhile that his work is has become an arena for contemporary theorizing about language within different discourses. Ihab Hassan, for example, asserted that Samuel Beckett was 'a supreme example of the postmodern artist, turning the malice of language against itself' (1982, 210). In his essay 'Wittgenstein, Heidegger, the

Unnamable, and some Thoughts on the Status of the Voice in Fiction' Allen

Thiher proposes that the 'schizo-text' comically blurs,

the line of demarcation between fictive and nonfictive text in order to live out the madness that our various philosophical systems would ascribe to our daily lives. The schizo suspension of logic allows the Unnamable to live out his narrative project as an experiential critique of language theory (Beja 1983, 89).

Charles Glicksberg proposes that 'these divagations of a schizophrenically tormented consciousness' render Beckett 'the literary nihilist *par excellence*' (1975, 235). The text may be seen, on this level, as a 'fictional' interface of aspects of recent philosophical, literary and linguistic theory: as Iain Wright says, 'Beckett's texts seem to provide the ideal site for post-structuralist critical revelry' (1983, 66). All this would seem to suggest, then, that 'the schizophrenic', or the schizoid condition (as a metaphor accommodating theoretical thought from different domains), can simultaneously be seen as a 'fictionalized', or theoretically fabricated model of the focal mechanisms and diagnostic criteria of certain kinds of 'post-modern' writing and thought. It is working on this basis that critics such as Allen Thiher talk about Beckett's 'view of language and self' as 'a schizo-comedy that takes desperate delight in its own impossibility', and says that in this sense,

Beckett's work ushers in the era of the schizo-text, that is perhaps the post-modern text *par excellence*. Beckett's work gives full expression to the voice alienated from itself (Beja 1983, 89).

Beckett's work preludes 'the proliferation of post-modern works whose voices know not whence they speak or speak from that equivocal space called the text' (ibid., 89). However, not only do Beckett's textual strategies result in a text characterizable as schizoid, but he is at pains to frame the texts in terms of the *distress* involved in psychopathological experience. This fiction becomes pure suffering, the subject is impaled

upon a voice, the voice of the text and in nobody's head. There is a howling coming from beyond the philosophical 'dissertation' (Beckett 1979, 288). Critical approaches to Beckett perhaps tend to demonstrate an apparently correspondent 'flattening of affect', a lack of interest, or indifference to this *malapropos* tragic component. It seems that in this dramatic element of the fictional enactment of a psychotic condition Beckett has ironically preserved something more 'authentic', less fabricated, than those fictions woven through and around the text by modern philosophical 'symptomatology'. To an extent before the event, Beckett reveals the tragedy behind what is understood to be an uncompromising investigation of language and fiction, of what turn out to be the conceptual borders between literature and madness.

Madness is no longer a marginal or 'gothic' concern, manifest and dealt with in a paranoid manner by fiction. Neither does it offer territory reclaimable as a richer, more authentic realm of consciousness. It is, in the work of Beckett, relentlessly assimilated into the fictional act on the basis that knowledge of self and world is never more than that. His texts allegorize contemporary psychological insights that take up the indeterminate quality of psychosis as an index to the obsolescence of the idea of normality. Disrupted subjective experience in earlier fictional treatments of madness represented the threatening 'other' of rational modes of understanding and describing 'reality'. It has by this time come to be understood as a story of every day, the definitive condition of the de-centred subjects and disinherited story-tellers — not always describable as 'fictionalists' — of a 'post-modern' and 'post-structuralist' world. It is, however, ominous in its refusal to excise distress or to maintain a divide between the academic and the infernal.

ANTINARRATIVE AND THE SCHIZOID TEXT: JEANNE HYVRARD'S *MOTHER DEATH*

The following extract, to which reference will be made in the course of this discussion, is from a novel by Jeanne Hyvrard, entitled *Mother Death* (1988, from *Mère la Mort* 1976)¹.

I hadn't foreseen. The death of the I. The transparent blue of dreams opening onto the other thing. The other part. The river with time and space mingled together going toward the mouth. Barques crossing the rapids below the house. At the place where there's almost no water. She hasn't managed to smother me. I survived my own birth. The cave in the cliff finally surrenders its drawings. The burn of immobile suns and light. How much more time behind blurred windowpanes? What do they know about what I see through them? Nobody masons the stones that come undone one at a time anymore. The cornice has already fallen into the street. Or only the gargoyle. I don't know. Nobody will come and fix it because the balcony's too high for anyone to reach. Too bad. It's not I who's speaking. I've disappeared completely into the river's single-stringed discourses. You've put nets on the roof to catch the stones falling from the cliff. But so many have fallen that they've crossed the roof. The wallpaper you hung floats at the stern of my joyful body. The cracks in the walls grow larger and thick paint doesn't keep the branches from the ceiling anymore. The drawing becomes clearer. The lines become more distinct. Your plastering doesn't conceal the essential anymore. A tree with a thousand sectioned hands under the ceiling. A tree that grows in my body and crosses the caved-in roof. A tree in the wreckage of the dilapidated house.

The postman brings letters but I don't go down to get them. I don't answer since they don't ask questions. Letters pile up on the stone steps going into the heart of the cliff. The answer's in the silence...But they can't stand the thick silence of the disappearance of names. They can't stand the absence of identity. They can't stand the disappearance of the 'I'...They speak in our place to be sure of silencing us. They gave my sickness a name. What was it again? They gave my sickness a name. But their diagnosis is wrong...(93-95)

A Different Kind of Unnamability

Whilst evoking some already familiar themes, this passage nevertheless suggests new problems, even from the standpoint of sheer readability, that need now to be addressed. There are two aspects to this text's

significance for the purposes of my argument; its narrative procedure is comparable in crucial ways to that of Beckett's *The Unnamable*, but it also connects with and carries forward issues that arose in the context of the discussions of Melville, Gilman and Woolf and from which *The Unnamable* represented a departure. I will first examine the ways in which the text connects with *The Unnamable*.

Viewing Beckett in relation to Hyvrard, it becomes evident that two quite different uses may be, and have been made, of the understanding of madness as a symptom or trope of the hazardous reciprocal relation between language and subjectivity.

Beckett's novels may be seen in the light of, or as a consummate expression of, the modernist suspicion that the words on the page are not the whole story and do not re-present an external reality; that they are never less 'the whole story' than when they appear coherent and controlled, insulated against 'the irrational'. *Watt* and *The Unnamable* inherit the discovery that 'reality' cannot be unproblematically represented when that reality can only be perceived through the disorder and complexity of subjective processes.

The Unnamable moves into the realm of the postmodern in its apparent affiliation with notions of the decentred subject and the primacy of language. It demonstrates an understanding that fiction can only refer to the real via language, which has been subjected to the same scrutiny as the human mind. Language must now be considered a constituent of mind and has been found equally perplexed in its relationship to 'reality'. The subject is produced through language and is therefore itself a kind of fiction. In its most radical dimension *The Unnamable* seems to engage with the critique of the subject which is a central postmodern concern. For the

Unnamable, there is, somewhere, tremendous distress, psychic disorientation and confusion; but the voice is not sure of being the origin or subject of this tension, there is no-one there to be identified as 'mad'.

The voice in *Mother Death* also seems to take up this topos of the de-centred self saying, 'It's not I who's speaking'; with, however, a slightly different emphasis.

I escape them. I'm unnameable. I'm my own name. Not the one they inscribed in my flesh to appropriate me. Not the one they tattooed on my dutiful wife's forehead. My real name. The unnameable...The splitting of identity. I'm unnameable (Hyvrard 1988, 7).

There are evidently distinctions to be made between Hyvrard's 'unnameable' and that created by Beckett. The alienation of the 'I' in language is similar, but the essential motivation behind this articulation of the predicament of the subject is noticeably different.

Hyvrard seems to be concerned with an intrinsic policing and *ordering* power in language, with the power of language to name and control. The speaker rebels against being named in a way that ties her to a societal function (that of the 'dutiful wife'), that initiates the internalization of social control, and that situates her as *subject* to the discourse of others ('They speak in our place....', as above). In *Mother Death* it is 'they' who 'can't stand the thick silence of the disappearance of names', 'they' who 'can't stand the absence of identity'. For the speaker herself unnamability does not seem to be an *impasse*, but both a beginning and an end, a desirable condition.

For Beckett there is no *inherent* orderliness in the relation of language to reality that is not vulnerable to disruption. In the moment at which it attempts to name the self language fails. Words continually negate what they confirm, destroy what they make, continually create and

dissolve the subject into silence.

I resume, you must resume, never stirred from here, never stopped telling stories...it's such an old habit, I do it without heeding, or as if I were somewhere else, there I am far again, there I am the absentee again, it's his turn now, he who neither speaks nor listens, who has neither body nor soul, it's something else he has, he must have something, he must be somewhere, he is made of silence, there's a pretty analysis, he's in the silence, he's the one to be sought, the one to be, the one to be spoken of, the one to speak, but he can't speak, then I could stop, I'd be he, I'd be the silence, I'd be back in the silence, we'd be reunited, his story the story to be told, but he has no story, he hasn't been in story, it's not certain, he's in his own story, unimaginable, unspeakable (Beckett 1979, 380).

Subjectivity is a philosophical problem. Any question of meaning is rhetorical:

And all these questions I ask myself. It is not in a spirit of curiosity. I cannot be silent. About myself I need know nothing. Here all is clear. No, all is not clear. But the discourse must go on. So one invents obscurities. Rhetoric (ibid., 269).

The right question is an impossibility. Beckett is apparently aligned with Lacan in this respect, 'for there even to be a question...there must be language' (1977a, 172)² and where 'language' has itself become the focus of ontological interrogation the premise of possible certainty seems to be invalidated. The Unnamable confines himself to 'fragmentary constructions which do not aim at universal explanatory power' (Lecerle 1985, 152); the questions lack pertinence, precluded by the inevitability of finding no satisfactory answer.

Yet, however fragmented, halting, disrupted the language of Beckett's Unnamable may be, there is still the ghost of polemic, circling around the lost centre. Unlike Beckett's Unnamable, Hyvrard's speaker is not convinced that 'the discourse must go on'. In *Mother Death* the text refuses this on several levels. It moves toward a consummation where any reflexive discursive considerations, presented as physical mutilation in the mechanics of linguistic logic ('they cut entire sentences in my flesh',

Hyvrard 1988, 42), finally give way to a lyrically rendered moment of synthesis with libidinal and physical female flows. The movement is illustrated in the opening phrases of the passage above:

I hadn't foreseen. The death of the I. The transparent blue of dreams opening onto the other thing. The other part. The river with time and space mingled together going toward the mouth.

This communicates a moment of release, a breaking out and away from the inherent regulatory logic of language. 'Mother Death' resides in the features of an untamed internal/external landscape:

We advance in the river. She's recognized us. She nods. The water's up to your knees. I have water between my opened thighs. Don't be afraid...(110).

A kind of desolate but vital *dreamscape* combines and recombines its elements, becoming the metamorphic ground of a mythic struggle. This struggle does not seem to be determined by the constant bifurcation or alternation of self between presence and absence, but is a figurative attempt to escape difference.

Atavistic formulations are typical of the procedure of the text, which creates images of a continuum between body and environment, word and matter. A new, and primal, kind of language is being evolved,

Roots, verbs, and substantives...Roots that spread out until they yield all possibilities...A language elementary enough for nightmares and for joy. A language elementary enough that it can put an end to searance at last (54).

'Searance' is a word used by Hyvrard, it seems, to infer an original unity which has been actively sundered and dispersed; this subverts the passive and given oppositional condition of difference.

Lack of clarity is not, it appears a problem (as it is above for Beckett's *Unnamable*), but an objective. 'Clarity', as that activity which separates, names and subjugates, is revealed as fraudulent and coercive,

the instrument of sexual imperialism ('I become everything they want me to be. They appropriate me. I disappear' 19, 'They want to make us talk. The only means they have of inserting themselves between our words and ourselves' 48).

Raymond Federman's *Surfiction* has been mentioned for its appraisal of Beckett as the representative of a new kind of fiction, alluding to a generic condition of 'unnamability' (1981b, 310-11). Federman's approach highlights a fundamental disparity between Hyvrard and Beckett.

Surfiction can be understood as a manifesto for the schizoid fictional text, the 'writerly' text (to draw on Barthes' useful distinction) whose primary intention is not communication but the suggestion of its own impossibility. The 'surfictional' text denies any ground for consensus of meaning between reader and text, language is apparently autonomous and opaque, it provides no index to Truth, delusion is not differentiated from reality. The texts do not set out to 'baffle' the reader so much as to alert the reader, via an antinarrative process which is offered as ontologically authentic, to the new reality of ineluctable, existential 'bafflement'. Federman wants to see the language of fiction approaching a form of *délice*, curiously echoing the configurations in Gilman's wallpaper:

It will circle around itself, create new and unexpected movements and figures in the unfolding of the narration, repeating itself, projecting itself backward and forward...the shape and order of fiction will not result from an imitation of the shape and order of life, but rather from the formal circumlocutions of language as it wells up from the unconscious (Federman 1981a, 11).

The only questions raised by this fiction concern the enigma of *itself* as,

a kind of discourse whose shape will be an interrogation, an endless interrogation of what it is doing while doing it, an endless denunciation of its fraudulence, of what *it* really is: an illusion (a fiction), just as life is an illusion (a fiction) (ibid., 11).

Thus fiction is understood to be the mirror not of what has been known as

'life' but of the *sur*-real, reaching toward the expression of a modern philosophical and psychological aporia. Federman suggests that any creature ('word-being') produced by this kind of discourse will be

made of fragments, disassociated fragments of himself...will be irrational, irresponsible, irrepressive, amoral...aware, in fact, only of his role as fictitious being.

The writing from which such word-beings emerge will be 'deliberately illogical, irrational, unrealistic, non sequitur, and incoherent' (ibid., 13). Federman celebrates the irrational, the psychotic as enacted and described in fictional discourse as a literary revolution, producing something which is also 'more true-to-life' (ibid., 13). The movement is toward the deliberate abandonment of any more than illusory access to a knowable reality, and is recognized as the purposeful assumption of an unstable, delusional but 'authentic' position.

As lyrical exponents of this manifesto *The Unnamable* and *Mother Death* operate very differently. The tragi-comic inflection of Beckett's speaker's awareness of his role as 'a fictitious being' accentuates the impression that the narrative is haunted by the 'decentered' self, returning insistently to the scene of its demise or displacement. In *The Unnamable* we see Federman's 'wallpaper' vision of literary practice shifted from the experimental to the persecutory in a manner which aligns it with the dynamics of Gilman's text. In *Mother Death* Hyvrard's subjective 'voice' is set up in opposition to an 'other' which is not simply language but users of language, who maintain power over her; they *disempower* her, and diagnose her as sick (see passage above). If she uses this language, abides by or plays with its conventions, she is complicit in her own disenfranchisement, not simply in an *exposé* of the fraudulence of literary practice. Further, the abandonment of the notion of any stable reality

beyond language militates against the implication of a social, rather than philosophical impasse (already seen to be a premise of the text).

The language in *Mother Death* can be said, in the manner outlined by Federman above, to 'create new and unexpected movements and figures in the unfolding of the narration, repeating itself, projecting itself backward and forward'. An operative principle in this text would seem to be one of repetition, even recitation. However, it cannot be said to 'circle around itself' in the focussed and contrapuntal manner this implies. It is sporadic and fluctuates; a variety of states, landscapes, impressions, motifs (a river, blood, a disintegrating edifice, a desert, memory) continually resurface, revolve and fold in upon each other, abandoning the field for a kind of anarchic *jouissance*. The text circulates tropes of fluidity (for example, in the repetition of 'the river's single-stringed discourse') and generates linguistic shifts which enact the fusion and symbiosis of all life and all states. The animate and inanimate cohere, internal and external interlock ('The wallpaper you hung floats at the stern of my joyful body', 'thick paint doesn't keep the branches from the ceiling anymore', cf. opening passage).

The text is predominantly 'non sequitur', and incoherent. However, behind the constant disruption and displacement, a diachronic or narrative dimension is operative within the text, as opposed to the essentially synchronic, interrogative mode of *The Unnamable*.

In *The Unnamable* there is no suggestion of amelioration or emancipation, only, as has been noted, of an interminable *dwindling*. Beckett's 'Unnamable' is persecuted by a 'they', or an 'other', which is most often identifiable as language, or words. There is no escape from this agonistic domain. The Unnamable perhaps regrets a former state where the

('his') fictional selves circulating in the text were erroneously engaged in giving an account of 'truths' and certainties that are now perceived to be nothing more than a fabrications. They were,

invented to explain I forget what. Ah yes, all lies. God and man, nature and the light of day, the heart's outpourings and the means of understanding, all invented, basely, by me alone, with the help of no one, since there is no one, to put off the hour when I must speak of me. There will be no more about them.

I, of whom I know nothing (Beckett 1979, 278-9).

But their usefulness is expired. He can see no other way to be except in language, in this racking half-life of unnamability. The subject is locked into the oppositional logic of speech/silence.

Hyvrard's protagonist, however, strives toward silence as the other, and somehow original condition, before language (before separance).

Silence is not the other of speech, is not always in potential and a phantom; it is a future and a past. While there is no clear narrative progression in *Mother Death* (it is, like *The Unnamable*, procedurally antinarrative) neither is the speaker encaged in an inexorable aporia.

There is a history, indistinctly intoned or sporadically voiced:

Mother death, the invaders came and said you were two. They've changed our history but haven't been able to kill our memory. The conquerors came and that's all we know. Women die locked up in their walls (Hyvrard 1988, 60)

This seems to detail an original moment of 'separance', or of a fall into difference, where, for example, life ('mother') became distinct from and opposed to death. Threads of an archetypal narrative can be run in the text. There is a subverted biblical account where what is omitted is the seminal nature of the Word, which becomes an agent of interference:

Let's start again. In the beginning was chaos. Then the earth. The earth begets the sky and unites with him. But chaos means openness. They translate it as 'emptiness'...Already at that point, something's wrong. Already at that point, they separate mother from daughter. After having separated space from time. And sky from earth. The more time passes, the more they separate us. I was earth and sky

and time. They tore the sky from me. We were just one (ibid., 61-2) Linguistic configurations are developed in the text which also indicate that, on the level of some sort of mythic temporality, the speaker *has* changed/is changing state. This is not a constant alternation but a process of becoming 'other', becoming 'Mother Death'. She has been 'locked up' (2) and silenced, and is gradually metamorphosing into a condition in which the effects of this outrage will be reversed or negated, and conflict transcended:

Help me relearn the language they tore from me. Help me relearn the language that has sedimented in the gulfs of my memory. Help me relearn the language in which words mean their opposites...They say they are going to cure me. They say I must get well. They've mixed words together and they don't know how to speak anymore. They've mixed words together and they confuse opposite and negation (2-3).

The text does not proceed by 'affirmation and negation' (Beckett 1979, 267), oscillating between speech and silence, life and death, 'I' and 'not I'. The voice of the protagonist seeks to subvert and exceed this dualism or 'separance', to move on from the state where she lives 'in separance. Path of disaster. Crossroads of madness' (Hyvrard 1988, 2). There is a kind of submerged narrative at work, moving from an entrapped and suffocated past (before the text begins) toward some kind of freedom, a new state of consciousness, as the protagonist moves deeper into silence or 'unnamability'. The antinarrative and 'antiseparance' manoeuvres are participants, it seems, in the unfolding of an unarticulated narrative; the struggle in the text is a point on a trajectory. These manoeuvres are not indicators of an ineluctable condition. *The Unnamable* concludes with the words, 'I can't go on. I'll go on'. *Mother Death* concludes with the suggestion of engulfment in a polymorphoous and oneiric materiality; and words which suggest that they are the residue of a struggle completed

long ago:

Tears are like light from the stars. Sometimes it reaches us even though its source may have disappeared a long time ago (ibid., 110).

Mother Death demonstrates in its fabric the embrace of nullity; the speaker embraces and is embraced by it. Seen in relation to this text, Beckett's writing and Federman's lyrical theorizing of the surfictional, postmodern text are revealed to have in common the assumption of a gendered male subject as the focus of textual dissolution. In *Mother Death* the wordless silence into which the gendered female 'I' is pulled, toward which she moves (this ambiguity is intrinsic to Hyvrard's narrative procedure) is feminine, 'Mother Death'.

Mother Death, the unnamable. I run toward you. The current carries me toward the abyss where I'll be reunited with you (70).

The agent of persecution, from which this reclamation of lost female territory represents an escape, is language — revealed as male language. The Unnamable laments his loss of identity but cannot escape the tyranny of language. Hyvrard discloses, strategically appropriates and inhabits a disarticulated domain:

Mother death, they look for the name of my illness.....If I find it, they'll let me leave. I'm both she and I. It's I who devour and destroy myself. Red acids. If I consent to being her. I survive. Consciousness being molded. A behaviour being learned. If I am she, I survive. Beginning of osmosis. The victim's consent to the executioner. I'm going to die. Symbiosis. Loss of identity (31).

Exposing the narrator as a fictitious being, uncovering the artificiality of this activity would not, it seems, serve Hyvrard's project as an end in itself. There is a political impetus in the text which moves it closer in this sense to 'Bartleby', *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. Rendering the *inevitable* and tragic deception of 'man' by 'language' in the form of an antinarrative process would defeat the attempt to reveal language as

the site not of an inevitable (and nescient), but of a specific and socially inscribed misrepresentation.

Madness and Protest: Reclaiming Uncharted Territory

In terms of the treatment of subjectivity in *Mother Death* then, Hyvrard both coincides with, and departs from *The Unnamable*. Hyvard raises gender as an issue. Similarly, in terms of narrative procedure, the text displays comparable but ultimately divergent characteristics. Though demonstrating an antinarrative process, it nevertheless seems to avoid entrapment in the kind of epic metalinguistic stasis that maims Beckett's *Unnamable*.

Largely responsible for this is the implied reference to a reality beyond the text, via the inference of the social as against the purely linguistic production of the subject. This is combined with the generation of a kind of prototypical or mythical narrative substructure. Taken together these functions may be thought of as inserting the text into a political praxis. The manner in which these are *linked* will be more fully addressed in the concluding section of this chapter. They will first be treated separately, as components in the following narrative levels.

In one sense *Mother Death* offers the narrative representation of a woman imprisoned in an asylum, diagnosed as 'mad'. Rather like *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the text then functions as the private and proscribed account of her experience. This is the level on which the text engages with the existence of the subject as a node in the network of social discourses (as is the case in 'Bartleby', *The Yellow Wallpaper* and *Mrs. Dalloway*). The woman is subject to the will of her oppressors to convert her, to force her acknowledgement that she is both 'woman' and 'mad', to secure acquiescence in their diagnosis:

They say I have a sickness. They give it a name. They say I'm unstable, precarious, lunatic. They say they want to cure me...They want to make a complete woman out of me. They don't know I see their coats of mail under the lace. They want to cure me of what, exactly? (16)

She struggles to escape this predicament, the constant attempts to erase identity and impose restraint.

In another sense, the text becomes a poetic exploration of a condition rather than a narrative account of it; the narrator takes on the iconic significance of 'woman', the excluded feminine 'other' in a world founded upon masculine logic (more explicitly than was the case in Gilman's tale). The narrator is confronting the schizoid or disjunctive nature of her being, and needs to transcend this.

In a third sense, the poetic and narrative dimensions of the text are subsumed within the submerged narrative which presents a 'maddened woman' (*enfollée*, driven mad, 1) *questing* for a lost stratum of experience. The text will now be treated with a view to the use made of madness on these different levels.

Through the presentation of the narrator as a psychiatric patient Hyvrard allows the text to slide into cultural commentary, tapping into an established metanarrative which represents a gradual process of psychic oppression and distortion. This process is thought to arise from the formation of modern society generally, and more particularly from the authority accorded to the psychiatric profession, who are thought to perpetuate such distortion. A major proponent of this scenario is R. D. Laing. The influence of his anti-psychiatric polemic cannot be underestimated in its effect upon later thought. Laing's emphasis upon the 'ontological insecurity' which threatens every mind with 'schizophrenic' breakdown (Laing 1965)³ has played a key part in revolutionizing attitudes

to madness. It accepts schizophrenia as a *description* of the individual's existence in the alienated state produced by Western civilization, but rejects it as *diagnosis*. This resistance is echoed in the initial extract from *Mother Death*, 'they gave my sickness a name. But their diagnosis is wrong'. (This is the doctrine - psychosis as a kind of health or at least a therapeutic process - that Lionel Trilling suggested as early as 1972, had come to pervade the attitudes of 'a consequential part of the educated public'; Trilling 1972, 171). Madness is also made use of strategically, toward cultural critique by Michel Foucault in *Madness and Civilization*.

Foucault posits a metanarrative within which is theorized the colonization of experience classified as 'mad' by the language of reason, of science, of government, morality and responsibility. Foucault seems to valorize the experience categorised as madness as the sign of a liberated and purer condition, a state violated and silenced by the interested discourses of rationality. The doctor or psychoanalyst is seen as an intermediary between state and subject, a policing agent set in place to 'decipher', translate or misrepresent the language of the mad. This figure originates in the need to enforce and protect the,

massive structures of bourgeois society and its values: Family-Child relations, centered on the theme of paternal authority; Transgression-Punishment relations, centered on the theme of immediate justice; Madness-Disorder relations, centered on the theme of social and moral order (Foucault 1967, 274)

Hyvrard's *Mother Death* is on one level a dramatisation of this process (as are, to an extent the fates of the narrator in *The Yellow Wallpaper*, and of Septimus in *Mrs. Dalloway*). The madness of the narrator is presented as a journey into, and expression of, an authenticity written over by psychiatric discourses working to evade its threatening 'otherness'. The omnipotent 'they' violate the experience of 'maddenedwomen' by labelling

their protest 'sickness'. Embedded in the narrative is this enraged statement:

So they made death out of us. They invented marriage counselors. Sex clinics. Sex educators. Psychoanalysts. Psychotherapists. Priests in ready-to-wear and haute couture...All these charlatans of our shared misery. These predators of our confinement. These fungi of our despair. And those women. Instead of screaming 'liars'. They screamed 'thank you'. Instead of screaming 'enough'. They screamed 'I'm cured' (Hyvrard 1988, 99).

Further, the recurrent 'they' in Hyvrard's text is not strictly confined simply to medical practioners, but extends to encompass Foucault's generalized collation of scientific, rational, institutionalized discourses - the custodians of reason in any guise ('their' voices may talk of 'historical necessity, rights of nations, diplomatic agreements', or of the factual and grammatical mistakes in her writing; *ibid.*, 31 and 34).

David Cooper, a disciple of Laing, introduces *Madness and Civilization* observing that psychiatry is enlisted in the denial of 'our core-essentiality' (Foucault 1967, vii; this is in opposition to the ideas of the later Foucault). This is to be understood as an unmediated awareness of 'self'. He speaks of the relegation of the 'wildly charismatic or inspirational area of our experience to the desperate region of pseudo-medical categorization' (*ibid.*, viii), and advocates the goal of the 'autonomous assertion of pure, spontaneous Self' (*ibid.*, ix). Cooper's language is idealistic, semi-mystical (in a way that Foucault could be expected to reject). Yet both (like Woolf, like Laing) appear to have in mind an authentic self for which madness is both protest, escape, and free self-expression.

The self that 'escapes' determination by social and medical discourse in *Mother Death*, however, does not seem to cohere into a 'core-essentiality', is not one and self-identical but plural, a protean

consciousness which is found in that which language excludes. It is presented as both preceeding and exceeding language, being continuous with matter and the natural world (earth and water, flesh and blood, pain and feeling, hunger and thirst, light and dark). Its voice is found only in silence and the scream ('They have language. They have words. I have only a scream', Hyvrard 1988, 19). Branches, roots - a violent, exuberant nature - constantly press against and shatter the walls and ceilings of 'language', and the confines of the physical self. On this level, madness functions for Hyvrard and Foucault as a sign for the reclamation of lost psychic territory. A tension, or ambiguity remains, however; this lost territory only matters in the sense that it is both the hidden past and the buried center of the self, the self as protagonist in a narrative of oppression. Yet simultaneously, both attempt to dismantle the idea of the subject, of a core and constant selfhood.

The second level upon which the text may be approached involves Hyvrard's departure from Foucault's story, and points to a context for this tension. As has been noted, the protagonists in the conflict are explicitly gendered, and this is not the case with regard to Foucault, Laing or Cooper. 'Language' in *Mother Death* seems to become the material of the asylum walls that enclose her. It is characterized as the site of a discourse of rationality which creates the subject as masculine, situating the feminine as 'other' and unspeakable (confusing 'opposite and negation', *ibid.*, 3). As Hyvrard's 'unnameable' says:

They listen to my sentences and criticise the confusion of first, second, and third persons. They speak of the search for identity. But language is itself colonized. The search for identity. A false problem. A Woman seeks her identity. A madwoman confuses first, second, and third persons (54).

In its interrogation of language and subjectivity *Mother Death* connects with an ongoing feminist critique of Western culture's subordination of women in and through language. Virginia Woolf, for example, suggested in 1925 ('Modern Fiction') that 'For the moderns...the point of interest, lies very likely in the dark places of psychology. At once a different outline of form becomes necessary' (1984, 152). *Mrs. Dalloway* explores some of the implications of gaining access to those dark places, of charting the ways in which they have hitherto been relegated to insignificance, and of understanding the ways in which their insignificance is gendered, socially and discursively linked to that of a female or 'feminised' realm of experience. Much later, in 'The Laugh of the Medusa' (first published in French in 1975) Hélène Cixous casts new light upon Woolf's words, exhorting women to reclaim their creative territory, to emerge from the darkness and silence historically and linguistically imposed upon them, to find their voice:

Your continent is dark. Dark is dangerous. You can't see anything in the dark, you're afraid. Don't move, you might fall. Most of all don't go into the forest. And so we have internalized this horror of the dark (Cixous 1990, 318).

Woman must;

Write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies — for the same reasons (ibid., 316)

How this may done should not be *defined* she says, should not be *clear*, but always elusive, 'in flight' from masculine logic. Cixous sees women's literary silence as linked to a cultural repression of the female, which situates woman in the domain of the unconscious, the irrational, the physical — unable to speak herself. She recognizes Western thought to be fundamentally dualist in structure, and is concerned to demonstrate the

hierarchical nature of its oppositions, central to which is that of man/woman. Around this are ordered such oppositions as order/disorder, nature/culture and conscious/unconscious⁴. In 'the Laugh of the Medusa' she attempts to unravel and counter these.

I mean it when I speak of male writing. I maintain unequivocally that there is such a thing as *marked* writing; that, until now, far more extensively and repressively than is ever suspected or admitted, writing has been run by a libidinal and cultural - hence political, typically masculine - economy; that this is a locus where the repression of women has been perpetuated, over and over, more or less consciously, and in a manner that's frightening since it's often hidden or adorned with the mystifying charms of fiction; that this locus has grossly exaggerated all the signs of opposition (and not sexual difference), where woman has never *her* turn to speak (ibid., 319).

Cixous sees the way forward as lying in the hands of poets, as opposed to 'novelists, allies of representationalism' (ibid., 320):

Because poetry involves gaining strength through the unconscious and because the unconscious, that other limitless country, is the place where the repressed manage to survive: women (ibid., 320).

As is the case with Hyvrard, the strategy and the aims seem to be fraught with contradiction. Cixous seems to be recommending that women both remain within, and emerge from, darkness, unnamability and the domain of the irrational. The retreat into poetry and away from representationalism may be said to reenact the 'ghettoisation' of women's words, in a sphere distinct from the very domain where the repression of woman is constantly maintained and may be most clearly seen in its effects. Such a move apparently reinforces woman's disinheritance from meaningful utterance.

Another proponent of feminine writing who identifies a 'lost continent' of female experience is Luce Irigaray. In *This Sex Which is Not One* she posits a forgotten language;

One would have to dig down very deep indeed to discover beneath the traces of this civilization, of this history, the vestiges of a more archaic civilization that might give some clue to woman's sexuality. That extremely ancient civilization would undoubtedly have a

different alphabet, a different language...Woman's desire would not be expected to speak the same language as man's; woman's desire has doubtless been submerged by the logic that has dominated the West since the time of the Greek (Irigaray 1985, 25)⁵.

Again, it is not clear whether Irigaray sees this realm as reclaimable, and views this fiction as a metaphor for a condition which must be the basis for social change; or whether this is simply the lyrical evocation of a mythical state of being.

Hyvrard might be seen as a pioneer in this lost territory, or as an 'archaeologist'⁶, creating a different (if residually romantic) context for the use of the *topos* of madness. Hyvrard demonstrates a radical potential for what Cixous calls the 'sowers of disorder' (Cixous 1990, 325) in the schizoid text. Madness is valorized as a stratagem for reclaiming the lost territory of woman's desire, for erasing imposed dissections and boundaries, for bringing about 'an upheaval of the old property crust' (ibid., 326) (as apparently figured in the trope of crumbling masonry in the opening passage from text). As the unidentified speaker in *Mother Death* asserts, she will seek to uncover the 'language before the invaders' (Hyvrard 1988, 27):

I'll twist language until it works straight. They set up barriers to appropriate us. They've kept the forms that guarantee their power. But we'll liberate language and the mad will get out. We'll open the asylum doors. We'll unlearn how to speak (ibid., 73)

Let's recover the speech they tore from us and let's cry out our differences since that's the reason we're dying (ibid., 85):

Irigaray avoids pathologizing the fluidity of female consciousness as the 'other' of male unity and sanity, by attempting to fill the void with plenitude, turn the negative into the positive, to reevaluate femininity within a new semiotic field, or from the other side of 'the looking glass'. This is similar to Hyvrard's project in *Mother Death*. They attempt to

counter and escape the abuse of 'reason' that is understood, in different ways, to have contributed to the subjection of women, by refusing patriarchal language — and by positing a lost, primary or primeval female language⁷ that critiques rationality without repeating its exclusion of madness. Yet, the question remains, as to whether such tactics do not amount to a confirmation of the cultural exclusion of women.

Schizoid textuality and the *topos* of madness in *Mother Death* serve a dual function. As the polar and inverse response to subjugation in reason, they operate both as a form of protest and as a mode of liberation. As against Beckett's constrained voice, lamenting the inexorable logic of writing ('the discourse must go on') the voice in *Mother Death* may be said, like Cixous's female Voice in *The Newly Born Woman*, to be 'thrown forward' into the 'void':

She goes forward, doesn't turn back to look at her tracks. Pays no attention to herself. Running breakneck. Contrary to the self-absorbed, masculine narcissism, of being seen, of seeing itself... (Cixous and Clément 1986, 94)

Although Beckett's *Unnamable* can be said to display a curious, inverted form of narcissism (being seen not to be seen, not seeing himself), the text is continually examining its tracks⁸, enacting the 'endless interrogation of what it is doing while doing it' prescribed by Federman. It displays what Cixous might describe as the 'masculine anxiety and its obsessional relationship to workings they must control — knowing "how it runs" in order to "make it run"' (Cixous and Clément 1986, 96). It seems to be this which Hyvrard's speaker attempts to transcend, trying to avoid twisting around to see where she has been, and choosing instead to 'fly' onward;

She doesn't hold still, she overflows. An outpouring that can be agonizing, since she may fear, and make the other fear, endless aberration and madness in her release. Yet vertiginous, it can also

be intoxicating — as long as the personal, the permanence of identity is not fetishized — a 'where-am-I', a 'who-enjoys-there', a 'who-I-where-delight'; questions that drive reason, the principle of unity, mad, and that are not asked, that ask for no answer, that open up the space where woman is wandering, roaming...flying (ibid., 91).

Mother Death then, attempts both an expression of protest and a gesture of flight or liberation. As an expression of protest it is inscribed within a variety of metanarrative scenarios; those of, for example, anti-psychiatry and Foucault's history of madness. It is also locatable within a feminist theoretical context; that of *écriture féminine* and the search for a female language.

The latter, as has been noted, occurs in the text as a component of a substructural or implicit narrative. This involves the positing of a shift of state from an essential, aboriginal level of consciousness or existence to a condition of colonization where the realm of the feminine has been 'invaded', declared *terra nullius*. The story continues on a trajectory toward deliverance from this condition, involving a retreat from the socio-linguistic determination of subjectivity. This is imagined to be effected by fully inhabiting that marginalised state known as 'madness' which, it is inferred, conceals the threshold of this lost realm. Ultimately though, the strategic efficacy of such deliverance must remain in doubt.

The ambiguity arising from the interchangeability of internal and external, historical and psychological, spatial and temporal modes of representing this narrative works to hinder its communication. This is requisite since any clarity of narrative exposition would pull the writing too close to the domain of the 'agents of sense' to be appropriate to the project of disorientation invited in 'The Laugh of the Medusa', and acknowledged in the creation of this text. However, this basic structural figure persists, and it is this problematic dimension of the text (the

story of original freedom, subsequent oppression and liberation) that I will now examine further.

Madness and Liberation? Antinarrative and Metanarrative

It has been noted that *Mother Death* may be situated in relation to a variety of different critical contexts. In its proximity to Beckett's *The Unnamable* it can be seen to negotiate both the theoretical critique of the subject and the literary project of evolving a radical form of writing or schizoid textuality; these concerns are characterisable as 'postmodernist'. It also bears an intertextual relation to earlier representations of madness in fiction which take the form both of protest against social misrepresentation and oppression, and of the quest for alternative modes of consciousness. Further, it inherits the legacy of influential theorisations of the place of madness in modern society founded in implicit metanarratives of the regressive distortions and appropriations of a more authentic and irrational psychic continuum by this society.

Preeminently it correlates with recent feminist discourse, which is able to critique and appropriate each of the above (a similar strategy to that developed by Foucault²⁹) when the proposition is accepted that the *whole* of Western thought and intellectual enterprise is rooted in the subordination of woman in consequence of its founding hierarchical opposition man/woman.

Before addressing this strategic formulation further, however, a query attends the political aspirations of *Mother Death*. In its dissentient and redemptive dimensions the text, as we have seen, incorporates a substructural narrative of female liberation, which turns upon the trope of madness. However, bearing in mind its political agenda (its avowed

participation in the reclamation of woman from silence) the efficiency of this configuration would seem questionable. Can madness be as useful for feminism as *Mother Death* suggests?

There is the possibility that the positing of the disintegration of the self and loss of meaning and coherence in text and society *is* effective as a form of anarchism or inversion. It can be useful as a strategy for breaking down the outmoded, and gathering new perspectives. This, traditionally, has been the point of *avant-garde* writing. It is possible that the most powerful way of transforming meaning in language is to disperse, dissect, fragment that language so that its parts may be held up to scrutiny and the system weakened.

Conversely, it could be said that what appears to be figuratively and poetically liberational is also ultimately futile (as the image of the crawling woman in *The Yellow Wallpaper* suggests). Such liberation becomes re-entrapment within silence, a self-defeating form of protest. The retreat from language may be seen as a form of essentialism that in the end re-enacts the patriarchal suppression of the feminine¹⁰. That is to say, the fictional representation of woman as mad would seem to be to small advantage, perpetuating as it does the well-established equation between women and insanity, women and silence. It appears to be only rhetorically effective, as a fictional, provocative, hypothetical backlash. Yet this — as Christine Battersby observes — becomes problematic as doctrine:

Women creators still have to struggle (both socially and inwardly) against dispersing into the kind of Otherness now endorsed as 'feminine' by many of those who look to *l'écriture féminine* (Battersby 1989, 145).

The schizoid freeing of desire from the constraints enshrined within

language, though temporarily liberating is also liable to become negativity, fetishized apathy and unsatisfactory as an end in itself. The theoretical or hypothetical erosion of the lived boundary between sane and insane raises questions¹¹. Fredric Jameson has warned, in this regard¹², that,

the schizophrenic...is not only 'no-one' in the sense of having no personal identity; he or she also does nothing, since to have a project means to be able to commit oneself to a certain continuity over time. The schizophrenic is thus given over to an undifferentiated vision of the world in the present (Jameson 1983, 120)¹³.

What happens to those diagnosed as mad, unless they are capable of constructing a defence against being considered entirely subject and incapable, is that they lose control over their lives. This suggests that deploying language ideologically against the interests of the individual works in the favour of those perceived to be in control. If the speculative use of madness persists, it would be against the interests of those who have found in it a way of identifying and exploring what it is to be subject to that language.

What is at stake here is the loss of what Jameson suggests is necessary to action, upon and within the world, 'continuity over time'. In its procedural proximity to postmodernist concerns, its apparent denial both of the integrity of the subject and its retreat from the operation of 'reason' and narrative logic, *Mother Death* would seem to relinquish such continuity. Viewing *Mother Death* in the light of an exercise in *écriture féminine*, an anarchic and at the same time quasi-essentialist enterprise, can mean dismissing it as an effective vehicle for change. As Lovibond says in her discussion of the possibility of feminism in the postmodern world:

Subjectivity can be as fluid as you please, but this insight — once decoupled from the feminist ambition to reconstruct sensibility in

the interest of women — will no longer be of any specifically political interest (1990, 178).

Creating a space for a poetic/theoretical flight from a socially and discursively produced subjectivity as the site of oppression, and into madness or the dissolution of self, could be seen as premature retreat.

Christine Battersby points out that,

A feminist aesthetics cannot simply be an openness to Otherness; feminists have to concern themselves with what is involved in writing or creating as a *female* — as a subject positioned within the social and historical networks of power (1989, 148).

There must apparently be a point at which the focus upon the alienation of the self in language must be arrested. To reject language and discourse, before women have ever properly 'inhabited' it, or managed to employ it as a means of exerting control over their environment, is to reject the possibility of gaining the power to transform it.

In its accommodation of postmodernist and radical feminist concerns to the fictional *topos* of madness (focussed in the figure of the *maddened woman*) *Mother Death* could be relinquishing any claim to political vitality and efficacy. However, I will return now to the basic narrative configuration evolved in the text.

'Continuity over time' entails the positioning of the subject as protagonist within a narrative scenario, rather than dissolved within an antinarrative textuality. The fictional representation of the condition of woman, when politically motivated, might be expected to maintain the inscription of a history of oppression, and the projection of future liberation.

In its suspended, mythic simplicity, and despite its apparent discontinuity, the essential narrative configuration in *Mother Death* generates connections with contemporary metanarrative scenarios of loss,

invasion and oppression. It resonates with those of anti-psychiatric thought, and the 'history' of madness. Yet these may not be considered necessarily emancipatory in that they theorize loss, do not appeal to rationality for legitimation, but themselves are concerned to validate the irrational, the antinarrative and the anarchic as continuous with more authentic modes of being; as Foucault writes, 'We must try to return, in history, to that zero point in the course of madness at which madness is an undifferentiated experience' (1967, xi).

What seems necessary to a specifically political agenda is that it finds its legitimation within an *emancipatory* metanarrative, yet *Mother Death* apparently complies with the 'incredulity toward metanarratives' recognised by Lyotard as an index to the postmodern condition⁴. However, the antinarrative premise of postmodern thought is itself founded in narrative, a paradox common to *Mother Death* and thought about female language. Perhaps the most unexpected totalizing narrative with which it coincides is precisely that of postmodern thought (as articulated by Lyotard) which proposes the invalidation of knowledge and consciousness since the Enlightenment, and advocates the more authentic articulation of a 'disorderly' and 'directionless' world, 'an experience compounded of pleasure and pain' (Lovibond 1990, 164). Foucault's history of madness belongs, in the end, in this domain. He proposes a realm,

which is neither the history of knowledge, nor history itself; which is controlled by neither the teleology of truth nor the rational sequence of causes, since causes have value and meaning only beyond the division [notionally equivalent to Hyvrard's moment of separation] (1967, xiii).

Despite his putative historical framework Foucault opts ultimately for a synchronic and spatial overview of the position of madness in relation to the discourses of reason.

'Postmodernism' itself, then, can be said to have delegitimized metanarratives of *liberation*⁵, even to have suggested that, as Lovibond argues, maintaining faith in such a thing constitutes a kind of delusion. Lyotard's historical thesis about grand narratives develops itself 'into a series of more or less explicit suggestions on the subject of postmodern mental health' (Lovibond 1990, 397). In the postmodern quest for discursive novelty,

any lingering conviction that thought has some overarching purpose, some destination where it could rest, must be viewed as a sign of imperfect adaption to postmodernity. The authentically postmodern consciousness is experimental, combative, 'severe' (ibid., 397).

Clinging to outmoded political agendas, then, is a kind of madness.

However, perhaps there is a way in which such madness may nevertheless be considered sustainable, and licensed by the postmodern immersion in paradox; a way in which the feminist premise of *Mother Death* need not finally conflict with postmodern incredulity. Paranoid textual functions have been discussed in terms of their basis in a plot-forming, connection-making preoccupation. They constitute an essentially, emphatically narrative procedure where thought *has* an 'overarching purpose', that of establishing the process of cause and effect which has brought about *disorder*, simultaneously reasserting/constructing that order (schizoid textuality, on the other hand, to be succinct, involves the dismantling and subversion of order). Paranoid texts also demonstrate the ease with which narration carries over into delusion, into constructions required to bear no relation to a reality or history as it is generally agreed to be. This kind of textuality remains unimpaired when 'reality' and 'history' are not generally agreed to *be* at all, in any rational sense¹².

Hyvrard's use of madness within the core narrative configuration is paranoid. In a postmodern world perhaps feminism can only allow itself to construct or hypothesize, rather than record or discover, a history (or 'archaeology') within which a patriarchal conspiracy against, or persecution of women has been operating. In the case of *Mother Death*, at least, this becomes literally an insanely licensed narrative. It is able to attempt, unchallenged, a totalizing perspective. It does so in the recognition that, not only is truth relative, but this particular truth is being reiterated by a voice so liminal as to be beyond the reach of 'truth' or the 'severity' of postmodern critical modification.

The linguistic machine employed to maintain male superiority is in control of woman's 'reality'. The submerged narrative in *Mother Death* elaborates this history. Hyvrard suggests that the only recourse of the oppressed is to refuse the real, and to take refuge in madness — the kind of madness that disrupts (takes issue with) the levels of reason and logic that constitute that linguistic system. This recourse to madness functions within — and not against — the framework of a feminist metanarrative, the 'history' of women's oppression. Hyvrard's *maddened woman* is a protagonist in this story.

Communicated through the chaotic thought processes of a woman diagnosed by the agents of rational discourse as mad, Hyvrard's story of loss of freedom maintains the power of a historic trauma without being susceptible to further deconstruction. It also maintains its paranoid generative power by sustaining the symbolic, oppositional components or ciphers in the story; 'they' invaded — on many different levels — and maintain their assault in each and every realm of experience. (Laing and Foucault might also be said to have employed such paranoid tactics'®.)

This positing of conflict and disorder invokes the imperative that somehow the 'rent' in the order of the world must be repaired, the hierarchical inversion must be righted. Just as Schreber, in his madness, felt that his reason — even his body — had been usurped, 'feminised', *Mother Death* proposes that female consciousness and experience has been violated, colonised, 'masculinised', at some indistinct point in time; lost territory must be reclaimed.

Cixous writes, in *The Newly Born Woman*:

We see that victory always comes down to the same thing: things get hierarchical. Organization by hierarchy makes all conceptual organization subject to man. Male privilege, shown in the opposition between activity and passivity, which he uses to sustain himself. traditionally, the question of sexual difference is treated by coupling it with the opposition: activity/passivity (Cixous and Clément 1990, 64).

This foundational proposition enables the feminist interpretative system to assimilate each of the intertexts present in the text. Despite radical feminism's distrust of rational discourse, and despite the concomitant disruptive schizoid textuality of Hyvrard's text, it nevertheless appears that, once shifted into the domain of paranoid procedures, binary logic can be tactically valuable. Cixous's very articulation of the condition of woman inhabits and displays the heightened binary reasoning characteristic of paranoid texts⁷, reasoning which she wishes to attribute to masculine rationalist discourse but which is found provocatively reenacted on the level of the theory of woman's (passive) enslavement to man's (active) tyranny⁸. The power of this configuration contextualises the definitive lapse into undifferentiation sanctioned in *écriture féminine*. Though it is accomplished by inhabiting the disenfranchised space of madness, *Mother Death* still defends and maintains its capacity to strengthen the history of conflict and infer an emancipatory teleology (and arguably, this

distinguishes it from traditional *avant-garde* activity).

Such paranoid speculation does not fetishize entrapment in psychosis but constitutes a political stratagem. Feminism now seems to be in a position where it must struggle against being subsumed in the generalized intellectual 'institutionalization' of a postmodern 'schizoid' consciousness as Jameson describes it above. It needs to sustain the polemical power of the refusal of reason *only* where that reason has become the coercive tool of a patriarchal society, *not* as a generalized political 'dysfunctionalism'. The paranoid metanarrative is in this case of value as a textual element. Paranoid logic may be used strategically toward provoking the (re-)construction of a hitherto unrecognized pandemic plot perpetrated by a persecutory 'they' which represents a complex force at work in society. It also implies a historical agenda that contextualizes the use of madness as reaction. Thus it appropriates the compelling power of fictional narrative, where the 'reality' of woman's oppression is precisely what conventional reason produces and conceals; and what the contemporary questioning of the possibility of meaning and history undermines.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

POSTMODERNISM: USING MADNESS IN CONTEXT

The hypothetical 'postmodern' condition has proved too close to theories of 'madness' for this proximity to remain unexploited. The link between diagnostic language and literary representations of 'postmodern' experience is in the pervasive idea of the 'fiction' of self-hood, of world-representation' or 'textualisation', and the reification of language as the 'substance' of reality. This connection enables the strategic manoeuvres initiated by antipsychiatric thought to be brought into both poetic and political play. Psychosis and its diagnostic language have supplied writers with material for testing the sanity of individual and social experience in an era where the cultural guidelines on these matters have dropped away. Ihab Hassan has identified what he sees as the emergence of a uniquely postmodern entity, '*Homo significans*, gnostic creatures constituting themselves, and determinedly their universe, by symbols of their own making' (Hassan 1987, 95). His observation is borne out in that schizophrenia has become for recent thought a convenient, dominant and potent metaphor or signifier for a uniquely destabilized state of existence. Hassan himself submits that schizophrenia is a term which points to the postmodern 'tendency of indeterminance' (1987, 94). A mode of critique has emerged which takes as its principle focus not the literary object but the predicament of the self in contemporary Western culture. Across fiction and criticism, the implicit approbation of 'insanity' as a key to apprehending modes of existence in a postmodern world is sustained. Madness has been enlisted in the construction of a

postmodern 'self' and 'world' to be found represented both in fiction, and in the critical discourse which engages in constructing a cultural context for those fictional productions.

Self and Psychosis in Postmodern Fiction

Certain texts characterisable as 'postmodernist' can be examined for their representation of some form of psychotic subjectivity. The work of Thomas Pynchon, John Barth, Donald Barthelme, Doris Lessing and Kurt Vonnegut² is open to such analysis. Their uses of madness move between the ideas that 'the modern world is mad, there is no state of sanity' and 'the modern world is mad, the only sane individual is the madman'. The former paradigm treats the 'self' as no more than an 'effect' or ephemeral creation of that mad world, in the latter the self regains significance as something that exists prior to that world in which its essence is oppressed (when it struggles to express this 'core-being' it is treated as psychotic/driven to madness by that world).

Pynchon's narratives often apparently speak from the view-point of a not easily identified 'insane' consciousness, and are perhaps close to Beckett's in their interrogation of sanity as an impossibility. Pynchon's work is persistently concerned with paranoia. *V* (1963), *Gravity's Rainbow* (1975) and *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966) are all peopled with figures which display psychically disturbed characteristics and whose perceptions appear to be of a paranoid, delusional kind³. Characters inconclusively read signs, are convinced of national, technological and cosmic conspiracies closing in on them⁴.

Gravity's Rainbow recreates a war-time world. It is written in a multiplicity of registers, and produces a proliferation of signifiers which

bear no determined relation to signifieds. It effects a frenetic, nightmarish montage. All of this happens under the trajectory of a single rocket across the sky, passing unseen, in silence but followed by a sonic shriek (the text opens with 'A screaming comes across the sky...'). The rocket is interpreted by the characters as part of a conspiracy to annihilate humanity, operated by an unidentifiable 'They'.

Pynchon exposes his concept of paranoia in the text to an extent that it is suspect, and becomes a thematic topos. This perversely suggests that he is aiming beyond the presentation of the figure of modern man in a God-forsaken, superstitious condition, obsessed with cosmic conspiracy. The paranoia dominating the consciousness of characters in the texts, who seem to exist within a mysteriously and threateningly systematized universe, would seem to be the pretext for an elaboration of a deeper concern. This emerges out of the disjunctive mode of writing in the text, the ultimate sense of meaninglessness and disintegration experienced by the figures and the continuous disintegration of the sign in the text. This manifestation of the ongoing breakdown of order into disorder can be identified with Pynchon's recurring motif of 'entropy', the inherent measure of disorder constantly working to undermine structure, system and stability. In *Gravity's Rainbow* Pynchon opposes paranoia with 'anti-paranoia' (1975, 434), a schizoid condition, 'where nothing is connected with anything, a condition none of us can bear for long'⁵. The apocalyptic function of the rocket, of the rainbow of Gravity, is less related to a fear of death or destruction, than to a terror of and defeat by *unmeaning*⁶. In terms of textuality, the paranoid reading of the world as a provocatively elusive and cryptic text dissolves into the *délire* or the scream identified by Lecercle as operating behind language and

signification (as the scream follows the rocket).

An apparent comment upon the alienated and psychotic qualities of contemporary existence occurs in Barthelme's *City Life* (1970). Barthelme's writing displays a disrupted and disruptive, hallucinatory form similar to that of Hyvrard. The short story, 'Brain Damage', is a series of visions, accompanied by noises and voices, expressive of a radical schism between self and world, self and body, word and thing. It presents a universalized, traumatized consciousness⁷. There is an insistent sense of warning, of impending doom, of being perched precariously on the brink of annihilation as the piece concludes, 'Skiing along on the soft surface of brain damage, never to sink, because we don't understand the danger- ' (149). The text is interspersed with signs suggesting a listening, silent, distressed audience (single words in large black typescript, pictures of gaping, dislocated heads, a woman covering her face with her hands). It is punctuated by the cry 'WHAT RECOURSE?', Beckettian in its use of 'TO WHAT END?' and 'IN WHOSE NAME?'. The proximity of the prose to Beckett's is also evident in the confusion between voices and the impression of *bricolage*, as noted in *Watt*⁸.

In contrast to Pynchon and Barthelme, Doris Lessing's *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (1971) is concerned not with a generalized state of consciousness but with the fate of the individual consciousness which has abandoned the 'false consciousness' of others. The text is subtitled, in a manner reminiscent of Woolf's statement about modern fiction, 'Category: Inner-space fiction/ For there is never anywhere to go but in'. The novel charts the experience of Charles Watkins, an academic who is going through what might be thought of as a mental breakdown, but is presented in the text as an 'intrapsychic' or psychadelic journey. This takes place mainly,

but not explicitly, in the context of a mental hospital. The flow of his account of this experience is broken up by passages of dialogue, and letters between characters (hospital staff, friends, relatives) who have had some contact with the 'patient'. Their comments construct, obliquely, a 'case' for Watkin's illness in several ways; as the logical – rather than illogical – response to a contingent social reality, and as closer than first appears to the 'normal', but submerged, experience and suffering of other people.

Watkin's narrative bears an interesting similarity to that of Poe's Arthur Gordon Pym. The account is given in terms of a sea-voyage, into unexplored geographical regions and of strange, even supernatural experiences⁹. However, the narration does not provoke an interrogative urgency as to the reality status of events. They are 'psychotic' manifestations, framed by the location of the protagonist which, as is the case with Beckett's Watt, is a clinical environment¹⁰. The text relates a cosmic crisis and journey of Schreberesque dimensions, although it is more lyrically and imaginatively communicated. It reverberates with 'discoveries' similar in nature to any by Septimus, The Unnamable, or Schreber¹¹. The protagonist hears voices which criticise, from a cosmic perspective, the irrationalities and enormity of mankind's behaviour. Madness here speaks truth and prophecy, whilst doctors attempt to drug and shock the mind back into 'sanity'. The book stands in strong intertextual relationship to antipsychiatric ideology (a dimension of the book explored in Keitel 1989, 90-106). It reverses (as in *Mrs. Dalloway*) the status of the 'insane' and the 'sane', asserting that the dominant idea of normality is itself insanely impoverished¹².

Although it does share certain generic characteristics with these

fictional texts, *Mother Death* marks a departure from the conventions they adhere to. It is a hybrid text, crossing the conventional generic boundaries between fiction and theory. However, the current acceptance of the indeterminacy of genre and category has also broadened the scope of criticism. Play with the inversion and negation of the 'mad/sane' divide, and the awareness of the social implications of its deployment, is not confined to fictional experiments. They have an extensive counterpart in critical and theoretical concerns.

The Culture of Psychosis: Critical Representations

This development illustrates the imaginal force of the idea of 'schizophrenia', to the point of its taking on an emblematic or iconic role in recent critical thought. The term — by its very nature — invites the abandonment of conventional categorical precision. In his preface to *The Divided Self* Laing remarks upon 'our present pervasive madness' (1965, 13), indicating the premise underlying his work, which displaces insanity onto the 'sane' world and posits the schizoid condition as simply a response, an adaption to living in that world. Features of this antipsychiatric thought appear to have had a sustained influence upon later critical attitudes to, and uses of, madness. These include the adoption of Laing's scientifically and politically dubious but rhetorically potent strategy of generalizing (as did Freud before him) about a homogenous 'culture', 'world', or 'civilization', and about the self which finds itself either struggling to obtain integrity and stability within it or succumbing to schizoid fragmentation. They include the premise that schizophrenia is not insanity but a more 'authentic' way of being¹³.

In this separation of the notion of madness from any particular

psychological or clinical context, borrowing it as a *culturally* descriptive, or prescriptive term (Laing himself alternates between these uses of schizophrenia), critics demonstrate their debt to conventional anti-psychiatry. It is commonly remarked that literary criticism has become more concerned with characterizing the 'post-modern', and the features of the typical post-modern text, than with interpretations of specific texts. Notions of psychopathology have been enlisted in the identification of these features of the 'post-modern'.

For example, Charles Newman (1985) gloomily discerns 'a dim pathology of the contemporary, which amounts to Art is everywhere and Life is vague' (5). Language, he suggests, has become our persecutor rather than our servant: 'We have become acutely aware of language not as a mediating tool, but as an independent agency in its own right, a force which is not an adjunct of perception, but a competitor' (ibid., 30). There is no turning back: 'We have educated ourselves thoroughly in the psychopathology of contemporary art' (ibid., 98). Terry Eagleton is circumspect: 'There is perhaps, a degree of consensus that the typical post-modernist artefact is playful, self-ironizing and even schizoid...' (1987). Brian McHale in *Postmodernist Fiction* chooses to differentiate postmodern from other modern fiction by proposing a movement from uncertainty to entropy, 'Intractable epistemological uncertainty becomes at a certain point ontological plurality or instability: push epistemological questions far enough and they 'tip over' into ontological questions' (1987, 11) (just, perhaps, as paranoia tips over in Pynchon, into anti-paranoia). McHale, with some irony, reverses the 'experimental' label of postmodernist fiction to render it homogenous and rule-bound: 'It is no longer official reality which is coercive, but official *unreality*, and postmodernist fiction,

instead of resisting this coercive unreality, acquiesces in it, or even celebrates it' (1987, 222). McHale categorizes many postmodern texts as 'schizoid texts' (ibid., 190-194), using the term to comment upon the fact that these works are *divided*, mixing visual with verbal messages, playing with the physical appearance of the page, or arranging 'two or more texts...in parallel, to be read simultaneously'. By doing so, he suggests, these texts reflect a psychopathological ontology, 'they bring worlds of discourse, visual and verbal into collision', eclipsing the projected fictional world (ibid., 192)¹⁴.

The focus, in McHale's *Postmodernist Fiction*, upon ontological insecurity as a mode of explaining present literary preoccupations links these ideas, however obscurely, to popularized mid-century accounts of the nature of consciousness. Laing described the manner in which each 'normal' individual is prone to gradations of schizophrenic experience;

The individual in the ordinary circumstances of living may feel more unreal than real; in a literal sense, more dead than alive; precariously differentiated from the rest of the world, so that his identity and autonomy are always in question (1965, 42).

Postmodern fiction is talked about as promoting the reality of unreality, a 'schizoid' thematic, beyond as McHale says, a poetics of ontological issues. The literature which permanently places 'worlds under erasure' — which puts, as McHale observes, existence and event into question — works relentlessly upon an audience predisposed to doubt.

Critical commentators on 'post-modern culture', whose subject is frequently though incidentally fiction, display a preoccupation with ideas related to psychopathology. The vocabulary, at its most vivid and imaginative is often profoundly 'dystopic', suggesting disease, depravity, psychic violation and automization. Their style is experimental, excessive

- 'sur-' and 'hyper-' - repeating the surrealist 'manifesto' strategy and its attempt to assume the position of the revolutionary 'voice' of contemporary culture. Much of this writing is politically inspired, describing a consumerist, late-capitalist society alienating, or rather - as Fredric Jameson would say - *fragmenting* the self and destroying the possibility of value or meaning as constituting the means of stability for that self¹⁵.

Kroker and Cook, for example, are enthusiastically both ecstatic and apocalyptic. They proclaim their project as 'hyper-theory', an exercise or performance in 'panic reading', and announce:

The postmodern mood can alternate so quickly between hermeticism and schizophrenia, between the celebration of artifice and nostalgic appeals for the recovery of nature, because the self is now like what the quantum physicists call a 'world strip', across which run indifferent rivulets of experience. Neither fully mediated nor fully localized, the self is an empty sign: colonized from within by technologies for the body immune; seduced from without by all of the fashion tattoos; and energized by a novel psychological condition - the schizoid state of postmodern selves...(1988, vii).

Baudrillard diagnoses the contemporary modern, technologically tyrannized condition as universal psychosis and crisis:

If paranoia was the pathology of organization, of the structuration of a rigid and jealous world; then with communication and information, with the immanent promiscuity of all these networks, with their continual connections, we are now in a new form of schizophrenia. No more hysteria, no more projective paranoia, properly speaking, but this state of terror proper to the schizophrenic...What characterizes him is less the loss of the real, the light years of estrangement from the real, the pathos of distance and radical separation...but, very much to the contrary, the absolute proximity, the total instantaneity of things, the feeling of no defense, no retreat (Foster 1983, 126).

Where Baudrillard, like Pynchon, identifies in the schizoid self pain, fear, an exquisite vulnerability, Deleuze and Guattari offer this state of consciousness as revolutionary, and as combative. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* can be understood as a manifesto for a 'schizoid'

existence; 'We are all schizos' (1984, 67), it informs us. Deleuze and Guattari proclaim, 'schizophrenization must cure us of the cure'¹⁶. As commentators upon the 'post-modern condition', Deleuze and Guattari posit an environment within which only the 'schizo' can function freely:

We live today in the age of partial objects, bricks that have been shattered to bits, and leftovers. We no longer believe in the myth of the existence of fragments that, like pieces of an antique statue, are merely waiting for the last one to be turned up, so that they may all be glued back together to create a unity that is precisely the same as the original unity (ibid., 42).

While creating the context for their performance of 'schizoanalysis', they evolve an appropriate method of presentation, characterized in terms of 'a great disjunctive synthesis' (ibid., 39). Their adherence to post-structuralist thinking is evident in their lauding of a kind of writing

that ceaselessly composes and decomposes the chains into signs that have nothing that impels them to become signifying. The one vocation of the sign is to produce desire, engineering it in every direction...These chains are the locus of continual detachments - schizzes (ibid., 40).

Proust is chosen to illustrate 'a schizoid work par excellence' (ibid., 42), since the text is made up of 'asymmetrical sections', 'gaps between things that are contiguous'. This is the form of writing to which their own aspires; it is eclectic, random, exuberantly anti-systematic. Lecercle sums up their (anti-)methodology;

Theory is no longer superior to fiction: the teller of tales tells us as much about the abstruse question of meaning as the professed philosopher, and his texts are as useful for the understanding of schizophrenia as the reports of the psychiatrist (1985, 93).

Interestingly, however, all this happens within a strong conceptual framework of oppositions; Oedipus/anti-Oedipus, paranoia/schizophrenia, fascism/revolt, a tactic recognisable from the work of Hyvrard.

The similarity is again evident in the ideas of Fredric Jameson, who

draws upon Deleuze and Guattari to support his description of contemporary culture as 'schizophrenic'. He comments that their use of schizophrenia furnishes a 'relatively new literary classification of no little practical interest' (1988, 124). This is because he sees modern literature as attempting to regain awareness of an *authentic*, lost, schizoid 'primordial flux' (ibid., 126) which was the experience of the self before 'civilization' (when still in a state of savagery), and before the havoc wreaked by the modern, Western, capitalist existence. The strategic, paranoid myth-making remarked in Hyvrard is noticeable again here. Jameson uses the term 'schizoid' to designate the,

druglike dissolution of the bonds of time and logic, the succession of one experiential moment after another without the organization and perspective imposed by various kinds of abstract orders of meaning — whether individual or social — which we associate with ordinary daily life (ibid., 124).

He here attributes political value to schizoid textuality. Jameson wants to deal with what he sees as a 'basic feature of postmodernism', namely its peculiar way with time 'which one could call "textuality" or "écriture" but which I have found it useful to discuss in terms of current theories of schizophrenia' (1983, 118)⁷. He distinguishes the postmodern from the modernist in terms of their relation to psychopathology:

Concepts such as anxiety and alienation (the experiences to which they correspond, as in the *The Scream*) are no longer appropriate in the world of the post-modern...This shift in the dynamics of cultural pathology can be characterized as one in which the alienation of the subject is displaced in the fragmentation of the subject (1984, 63).

This fragmentation is welcomed, once more, as liberation;

As for expressions and feelings or emotions, the liberation, in contemporary society, from the older *anomie* of the centred subject may also mean, not merely a liberation from anxiety, but a liberation from every other kind of feeling as well, since there is no longer a self present to do the feeling. This is not to say that the cultural products of the post-modern era are utterly devoid of feeling, but

rather that such feelings — which it may be better and more accurate to call 'intensities' — are now free floating and impersonal (1984, 64).

This schizoid 'waning of affect' is also characterized by Jameson 'in the narrower context of literary criticism, as the waning of the great high-modernist thematics of time and temporality' (1984, 64). Schizophrenia, as the modern label given to many kinds of madness by psychiatric discourse, affords Jameson a conceptual and theoretical vehicle for playing his part in the quest for a more authentic way of being, in the culture of the liberated self. He wants to show, he explains,

the way in which what I have been calling schizophrenic disjunction or *écriture*, when it becomes generalized as a cultural style, ceases to entertain a necessary relationship to the morbid content we associate with terms like schizophrenia, and becomes available for more joyous intensities, for precisely that euphoria which we saw displacing the older effects of anxiety and alienation (1984, 74).

Jameson takes schizophrenia a step further away than Laing from its 'morbid', pathological connotations, undermining its psychiatric deployment by rendering it poetically desirable.

Across the extent of this work however, there does seem to be an inherent contradiction in Jameson's treatment of schizophrenia; it is not finally clear whether it is the result of postmodern society's fragmentation of the individual (rendering him critical of the operational modes of that society) or the rediscovery of a lost way of being (and therefore politically quietist, even romantic). Like Laing before him, it is questionable whether 'schizophrenia' is being used descriptively or prescriptively in Jameson's work; if it is the latter then this raises questions about the usefulness of such cultural critique (that is to say, of his 'identification of crisis' in contemporary culture). It functions rather as the recommendation of psychological crisis, as a form of cultural

adaption. As in the case of *Mother Death*, the political value of such rhetoric is at issue.

Writers of fiction who represent an approximate version of the experience of loss of self, discontinuity, fragmentation, 'madness' (Beckett, Pynchon, and Barthelme), would seem to engage with the pathos of the postmodern condition rather than with its potential for fearless liberation¹⁶, and (though often categorized as postmodern) do not seem to provide the 'joyous intensities' and 'euphoria' proclaimed by Jameson. Though still striving for liberation from a blindly entrapped existence, they doggedly remind us of the terror of this mode of liberation. Critical representations of this condition, however, seem on the whole to affirm the value of endowing it with psychopathological attributes.

Critical interest in psychopathology has presented two facets. It is used metaphorically to celebrate a revolutionary (or anarchic) liberation of the self. It is also used, connecting the linguistic bias in examinations of psychosis with that of poststructuralism¹⁷, to construct a universal, ontological state of 'split-off-ness' from certainty, reality, or meaning (each may be found in Kroker and Cook, in Deleuze and Guattari, and in Jameson). These uses involve the promotion of flux, surface, a-temporality, de-centering, dis-continuity, dis-junction, indeterminacy, de-construction and dissolution. In the case of Jameson, Deleuze and Guattari amongst others, the reign of the signifier, eternally severed from any signified, leads to the construction of a modern myth - another grand narrative - the ontology of the 'schizoid'. It could be said that the emancipation of the self, the exploration of and experimentation with the inexplicable, irrational dimensions of the psyche carried out by earlier fictionists has been subsumed within a body of radical theory which

conceives the ineluctability of psychopathology, and celebrates it as a new truth.

Before addressing further the merits of this extension of the use of madness (as a metaphor for contemporary existence) from fiction to related discourses, I will return to what have been the main concerns of this thesis.

IN CONCLUSION: USING MADNESS CRITICALLY

Since the end of the nineteenth century a discourse has been generated around exceptional states of consciousness that is now generally available to describe patterns in fiction. This thesis identifies two kinds of fictional process that present, describe, and — in terms of narrative strategy — participate in two essential forms of literary 'madness'. 'Paranoid' and 'schizoid' texts have been seen as polarized, and characteristic of different historical periods. These modes are not always separable. They operate at the limits of literary procedure. They encompass both the impulse toward systematization and coherence and the processes of disintegration and chaos. Their interaction constitutes a part of the textual dynamic in many of the texts discussed, beginning with that of Daniel Paul Schreber.

To be brief, paranoid textuality resides in, three basic characteristics of the text: the primary adoption of a coherent, explanatory, interpretative and logical narrative style; the application of this narrative discourse to the irrational, insane, supernatural or unknowable; and a resulting exaggerated, 'hyper-logical' process that is both enacted and provoked in the effort to achieve story, explanation, solution and synthesis. This reasoning becomes compulsive because it is

always incomplete, and ultimately brings about a transition from a logic based upon cause and effect as it may be agreed to operate in the 'real' (natural) world, to a process of reasoning which becomes delusional (for example, encompasses the supernatural) in relation to the predominant narrative mode. The question remains of whether texts can be called paranoid that are only exaggerating reading, writing, self-making processes. Is the narrative use of language by nature paranoid when it is striving for solidity against the intrinsic resistance of language to the unproblematic representation of reality? The earlier texts draw attention to this problem in an uncomfortable and provocative way.

In later experimental literature this focus becomes first radical and then almost mandatory. 'Schizoid textuality' is understood, relative to the paranoid dynamic, as resistant to coherence, interpretation and ultimately to being described as 'narrative' (if 'narrative' is understood to denote sequence and continuity). It breaks down the provocative oppositions brought into play in the paranoid text (or deploys them tactically and covertly), dissolves differentiation, and promotes mechanisms of dis-integration.

In the fictional texts discussed the 'use' that literature makes of 'madness' has changed; or intensified. It has undergone a paradigm shift. It is no longer to be represented or excluded by a narrative discourse which sets itself beyond disturbed states of consciousness, or which plays with the challenge offered it by the enigma of madness (as in the 'marginalized' gothic fiction which displayed a preoccupation with the marginality of madness). Indeed, it would seem that such play is no longer possible, or possible only on a very abstracted and sophisticated level, since the boundary between reason and madness has been eroded. Instead,

prose fiction has experimented increasingly with the effects of speaking from the position of madness (Woolf, for example), or attempted to 'write' the irrational (Beckett). Writers like Poe and Hogg, in their defiance of plot, narrative, syntagm, logos, began a specifically literary excursion beyond the confining parameters of sense. As the mechanics of language and the discursive production of false and shifting subjectivities become implicated in the understanding of what it is to be psychologically unstable, fiction continues to invoke 'abnormal' or 'insane' consciousness in its imaginative enterprise: yet the 'ab-' and the 'in-' no longer really apply. And neither can literature perhaps be said to be 'using' madness; it will not sustain the implied differentiation.

Recently, diagnostic language has been employed, in a literary-theoretical context, to blur the boundaries between fiction and reality: concern with the nature of language and the relation of the psyche to language has made way for the questioning of 'reality' and literary realism, and for the extension of the study of fiction to cultural and philosophical commentary. The apparent diminution in the immediate dramatic intensity of the term 'madness', which was derived from its power to distinguish the ordinary from the extraordinary is, famously, approached in a challengingly broad cultural perspective by Michel Foucault²⁰.

Foucault concludes that the modern, Western world's experience of madness has become universally mediated and controlled by the figure of the physician, psychiatrist or psychoanalyst. Effectively, this figure commands 'the whole experience of madness' (1967, 269), and has been invested with 'quasi-divine status' (ibid., 277). The figure of the physician operates from within the socius, rather than from above, and replaces the patriarchal Christian God as regulator of the limits of

reason, knowledge, the constitution of the 'self' and the boundaries of the moral and social order. Whilst mapping out a credible scenario within which the transformation of 'civilized' society's treatment of madness may be charted, Foucault does not offer a definition of that madness. His rhetorical use of the term implies an unspoken or unspeakable essential *signified*, a reinstatement of the 'pre-scientific' otherness of insanity.

However, the use of madness in modern fiction is, perhaps, a site where exploration of conditions of mind may go beyond convention and be freer of clinical designation of the shapes consciousness takes. Recent studies, such as *Modernism and the European Unconscious*, take up the view that uses of madness in twentieth-century fiction can provide an index to wider cultural developments, seeing modernism, for example, as 'a revulsion against the limits set by the rationalism and scientism of the last half of the nineteenth century', and demonstrating a

desire to open up uninvestigated areas of the mind – the whole mind, in its unconscious and irrational aspects, as disclosed by the new forms of depth psychology at the turn of the century (Collier and Davies 1990, xiii).

It is decided here that this search in fiction for the deepest sources of the modern psyche 'provides the richest insight into the epistemological configurations and historical origins of our own age' (xiii).

Criticism of this kind recognizes a shift from the nineteenth-century positivist to the twentieth-century intellectual relativist world-view²¹. How, then, might the fictional treatment of madness fit into this panoramic narrative scenario? When reason, rationality and objectivity begin to lose their metaphysical confirmation, then madness and the irrational come free of their moorings and start to look dangerously invasive. As a consequence of the breakdown of the dualist paradigm, 'madness' can no

longer *mean* in a positive sense, as the opposite of reason. It can not simply be 'other' and always mysteriously beyond the conscious self. Instead, it describes the perception of and response to the encroachment of chaos upon the citadel of 'the self'; it could operate metaphorically as the sign for the threatened stability and unity of the self, *for* the condition of that menaced self. Madness as part of a *process* (rather than as a stable signified) underpins the narrative dynamic of the nineteenth-century fiction examined in this study. Characters in these texts do manifest certain modes of behaviour that are presented as 'mad', but madness also operates structurally in a manner which exceeds the bounds of a fictional 'case study'. These works have, as a characteristic feature, recourse to the positivist claims of science as a source of transcendent signification, but the ambiguity that arises through the conflict of scientific and metaphysical codes tends to be obstructive of narrative resolution²².

In a twentieth-century relativist universe the objective narrative presentation of madness becomes increasingly problematic. This analysis of the presentation of madness, as regards the modern texts, was particularly concerned to examine the functions of the shift of attention from its social significance toward the analysis of meaning production itself²³. This is nowhere more evident than in the direction taken by modern discourse on the subject of exceptional states of consciousness. It is, as is demonstrable in the work of Freud and Jacques Lacan (further discussed in the appendix), culturally and linguistically informed. 'Madness' is relative to continually re-negotiated cultural and linguistic norms. Ultimately it seems to become, in fiction and theory, a metaphor for the entrapment of the shifting 'de-centred' self within this ineluctable

condition of relativity.

Foucault would argue that the divide between sanity and insanity in society discussed as no longer operative *is in fact so*, but in a new way. It has been continued by the discourse of psychology;

You tell me that all this is finished today or is coming to an end; that the madman's speech is no longer on the other side of the divide; that it is no longer null and void; on the contrary it puts us on the alert; that we now look for meaning in it...we have even gone so far as to come across this speech of madness in what we articulate ourselves, in that slight stumbling by which we lose track of what we are saying. But all this attention to the speech of madness does not prove that the old division is no longer operative. You have only to think of the whole framework of knowledge through which we decipher that speech, and of the whole network of institutions which permit someone - a doctor or a psychoanalyst - to listen to it, and which at the same time permit the patient to bring along his poor words or, in desperation, to with-hold them. You have only to think of all this to become suspicious that the division, far from being effaced, is working differently, along other lines... (Young 1981, 53).

Yet both the fiction and the theory concerned with madness remains separate from clinical or medical interpretative specialisms. These specialisms, however, have not remained exempt from the interpretative operations of literature. Those institutions that find it necessary to maintain the divide between sanity and insanity have been placed under scrutiny by literary interrogations of the self. The privilege of fiction is that it can explore the implications of such knowledge, and yet cannot be positioned as 'patient'. Schreber's narrative (not fiction in any orthodox sense) did become a patient; it has undergone discursive control or reconstruction on successive occasions since the time of his submission of it in court in his defense (just as, perhaps, Foucault suggests the human subject is constituted and acted upon by social institutions). Consequently, the insights that might be gained from it have been obscured (as Morton Shatzman says in *Soul Murder*, and as Foucault might say),

primarily by Freud's definition of it as a 'case history', anomalously 'written by himself' and 'brought before the public in print' (Freud 1979, 138). Schreber's text did not 'bring along its poor words', or 'with-hold' them. As Freud himself said, 'paranoiacs cannot be compelled to overcome their internal resistances...they say only what they 'choose to say' (though Freud nevertheless undertook to render Schreber's words an oblique facsimile of what *he* chose to say). Schreber, like the Ancient Mariner, wanted to tell his story, as a story, to others, so that they 'may have some understanding of the necessity which forces [him] to various oddities of behaviour, even if they do not fully understand these apparent oddities. This is the purpose of the manuscript' (1988, 1). His priority was communication, the establishment of community with others, the laying bare of his suffering so that he would not be considered monstrous, or silenced by reason, in the manner that Foucault believes is necessarily the fate of the insane. It could be said that Schreber internalized the discursive silencing of madness, and brought to bear contemporary social 'policing processes' within his own subjectivity, in his efforts to imbue his experiences with some coherence and to make them *make sense*. Yet he no more wished to erase and medically 'flatten out' his perceptions than later fictionists.

There is a sense, however, in which the discourses that surround fiction *have* suggested that not only fiction, but the whole of modern literature and culture was somehow to be 'diagnosed', and in opposition to those institutions whose business it has been to diagnose individuals. It could be that there is some danger in this eliding of issues, and I want, with regard to this tendency, to distance my own critical endeavour from such broad applications. I believe that terminology that has been derived

from psychology and psychiatry is useful when applied to specific literary explorations of exceptional states of consciousness and their evocation through experimental narrative strategies, but less so when it exceeds these parameters. We are ultimately able to see *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde', 'Bartleby the Scrivener', *The Yellow Wallpaper*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *Watt*, *The Unnamable*, *Mother Death* and many more such texts not as case histories but as texts which give readers imaginative access to alternative states of consciousness, to the ways in which we read and write the world and our experience (to the 'dark places of psychology' upon which they shed a little light). This being so, perhaps it is best to maintain, for the time being at least, if not the divide between sanity and insanity, the boundary between fiction as a ritualized space of experience and those discourses which analyse, describe, prescribe culture, society and modes of subjectivity, and which are still exempt from the fictional 'as if'.

To release madness, even hypothetically, into the society we inhabit and the individual mind — because we have undermined any capacity we may have had for limiting its dominion — is liable to leave us exquisitely vulnerable, persecuted by 'reality' in a newly Gothic world intent upon hunting down the 'self', and replacing it with nothing but its ghost, a collection of 'schizoid intensities'. That is not to say that such theoretical commentary should not be enlisted in our understanding and interpretation of artistic texts, to the enrichment of both, but simply to suggest that outside of the province of fiction the intellectual approbation of schizophrenia and disapprobation of our attempts to relieve suffering are, perhaps, unwise. Scientific studies of the psyche may in

some way tyrannize over our psychological freedom, they may have a hidden political agenda, they may contribute to a frequently unwholesome severance between madness and reason. But *until* we create new ways of trying to understand ourselves, that allow for the amelioration of the condition of those who are manifestly (or even hypothetically) in states of social and psychological crisis or distress, it would seem premature to invalidate or destroy such an ostensible healing praxis in the name of the conceptual authenticity of a pure, un-reconstructed self-hood, or to proclaim the prevalence of relativity and the demise of 'truth'. The fictional treatment of madness, of whatever kind, is, and perhaps always has been, one of those ways.

Appendix

SCHREBER'S *MEMOIRS* REMODELED: FREUD, LACAN AND LAING

Freud and Narrative

Freud may be considered the first to have read Schreber's *Memoirs* as a 'paranoid' fictional text, beyond his reading it as a text written by a paranoiac'. Madness is still the focus and provocation of narrative (re)construction. His systematic reclamation of the psychological truth (the story of the development of Schreber's psychosis) as a hidden narrative or subtext beneath Schreber's own account of his experience points to his identifying a gap, an enigma in the account which must be explained by further speculative activity. This speculation takes the form both of the interpretation and distortion of Schreber's account in a mode equivalent to that in which Schreber's interpretation (and his psychosis) was seen by Freud as a distortion of the 'true' story. In a section entitled 'Attempts at Interpretation' in his case study of 1911, Freud systematically rewrites Schreber's story, following up clues, replacing Schreber's terminology with his own, Schreber's 'characters' with his own, translating 'the paranoic mode of expression into the normal one' (Freud 1979, 168). The major part of this essay is an elaboration upon Schreber's version, which he summarizes in this way:

We shall, therefore, I think, raise no further objections to the hypothesis that the exciting cause of the illness was the appearance in him of feminine (that is, a passive homosexual) wishful phantasy, which took as its object the figure of his doctor. An intense resistance to this phantasy arose on the part of Schreber's personality, and the ensuing defensive struggle, which might perhaps just as well have assumed some other shape, took on, for reasons unknown to us, that of a delusion of persecution. The person he longed for now became his persecutor, and the content of his wishful phantasy became the content of his persecution. It may be presumed that the same schematic outline will turn out to be applicable to other cases of delusions of persecution (ibid., 182).

Schreber's 'fictional' representation of his madness, and the madness inherent in his fictional representation, may in a sense be seen to be repeated in Freud's 'discovery' of the repression of homosexual tendencies as the origin of Schreber's psychosis. As Freud concedes, this can ultimately be no more than a hypothetical scenario gaining credence from its internal coherence and from its continuity with what is said, and what is not said in, but may be deduced from Schreber's text. Freud is candid about the apparent suppositional and unauthenticated nature of his methodology. He finds proof of Schreber's repressed homosexuality in Schreber's admission that, in his wife's absence, he suffered a fresh nervous collapse consequent upon nocturnal erotic fantasies of submitting to sex as a woman; this coincidence is alluded to for the substantiation of his theory, and in turn his theory confers meaning and coherence upon Schreber's experience, as he concludes — 'this hypothesis harmonizes with a noteworthy detail of the case history, which remains otherwise inexplicable' (Freud 1979, 180). It is, in a way, a delusional synthesis, as he says,

it remains for the future to decide whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber's delusion than other people are as yet prepared to believe (ibid., 218).

It is effected by the removal of the supernatural (God) from Schreber's schema, its replacement by the natural (first Schreber's doctor, Flechsig, and then his father) and the reframing of the plot in terms of a psychological biography able to claim scientific status (only) through its continuity with the real world (Freud will be satisfied if he can 'succeed in tracing back...the nucleus of the delusional structure with some degree of certainty to familiar human motives' (ibid., 171) and the rigour of its

internal logic (again as it coheres with Freud's account of the Oedipal narrative).

Very simply, the Freudian approach to psychosis — as regards Freud's treatment of Schreber's writing — is founded in a narrative or compositional process. Schreber's psychosis is evidenced in the clearly 'delusional' character of his narrative, Schreber's 'cure' remains in potential in the analyst's reformation and realignment of that account with the real². Yet, as Freud states, 'I had developed my theory of paranoia before I became acquainted with the contents of Schreber's book' (Freud 1979, 218). Recalling the strategies of the fictional 'editors' or presenters in the gothic texts, Freud then provokes the speculative response to his own account rendering it too a 'paranoid' text; 'I cannot conclude the present work, which is once again only a fragment of a larger whole' (ibid., 219),

I feel confident that every reader with a knowledge of psychoanalysis will have learned from the material which I presented more than was explicitly stated by me, and that he will have found no difficulty in drawing the threads closer and reaching conclusions at which I no more than hinted (ibid., 220).

Jean-Jacques Lecercle has said that, perhaps,

the only difference between Schreber and a novelist is one of social position, not one of mastery or control over one's text: doubt is cast on Schreber's mastery over the myths he composes by the fact that he was certified as insane, so that the open character of his text (the inconsistencies, the gaps, the threads left dangling) can be interpreted as symptoms of *déjà*, not as a rhetorical ploy, a way of opening a space for the reader's participation in the process, while carefully monitoring his reading (1985, 123).

Freud's own performance suggests that, without much difficulty, he might be added in to this equation. Freud's approach to insanity is curiously ambivalent in that it involves the application of a method clearly aligned with attitudes found in the earlier literature to a system of thought so

radical as to challenge those attitudes at their foundations. His invitation to the perpetuation of speculation with the end in view of establishing truth through continuity bears comparison to Poe's thesis in *Eureka*. The proximity between Poe's texts and Freud's has been comprehensively explored in Clive Bloom's study *Reading Poe Reading Freud*. Bloom proposes that;

Considered as narratives of analysis, (narratives that express themselves in the form of 'games'), both Freud and Poe's texts traverse a landscape neither of science nor fiction; a world belonging neither to the psyche nor the text. Poe and Freud propose opposite functions for their discourses in which Freud uses the discourse of fiction to find truth and Poe exploits the discourse of truth to create fiction. However, considered as types of narrative the two discourses are curiously able to intermesh... (1988, 4).

Further, it is perhaps less than coincidence that their analytic method may take the form of the effort to 'bring to light' something that should remain hidden - a crime, or a criminal³, through the (retrogressive) construction of *plot*⁴. As Freud explained in his address to members of the legal profession in 1906;

The task of the therapist...is the same as that of the examining magistrate. We have to uncover the hidden psychical material; and in order to do this we have invented a number of detective devices... (1959, 108).

When his attention is focussed upon the fictional presentation of madness Freud's approach is very similar. In his reading of Hoffman's *The Sandman* as illustrative of the 'uncanny' in 1919, he ventures to refer the disturbing quality of the text 'to the castration complex of childhood' (1985b, 233). He chooses this explanation *over another*, which he sets up in order to deny. That is the idea of 'intellectual uncertainty', which renders the uncanny 'something one does not know one's way about in' (ibid., 341). Freud builds upon the identification made by Nathaniel (the central 'mad' protagonist) between the memory of a man encountered in his

childhood (already connected in the child's mind with the threatening fantasy figure of the sandman who removes and eats children's eyes) and a strange figure who intrudes into his adult life selling glasses. Before his analysis, as in the case of Schreber, Freud offers a summary of the story which actually remodels it into a chronological narrative locating the origin of Nathaniel's disturbance in the childhood castration complex and tracing its evolution through his life as it emerges at critical points in his relationships with women (his mother, his fiancé, the mechanical doll Olympia). He decides that intellectual uncertainty will not account for the uncanny effect of the story because we are certain that Coppola *is* Coppelius ('the story makes it quite clear that Coppola the optician really is the lawyer Coppelius and also, therefore, the Sand-Man' (1985b, 352) as the story concludes. Freud proposes that 'we know now that we are not supposed to be looking on at the products of a madman's imagination, behind which we, with the superiority of rational minds, are able to detect the sober truth' (ibid., 352).

We *know* no such thing, we can only speculate; and Hoffman has engineered this ambiguity in his disorientating and provocative narrative technique. Freud's rare use – and dismissal – of the word 'madman' here, in a literary context, and as part of the effort to erase uncertainty is interesting. He suggests that a naïve reading of Nathaniel as 'mad' provokes the intellectual doubt that would be the obvious but mistaken cause of the 'uncanny' impression the story creates. The question arises as to what Freud could mean by 'madman', and under what special circumstances 'madness' would arouse uncertainty in the psychoanalyst. Is his Oedipal interpretation of Nathaniel's delusions not also detection of the sober truth? Or is it simply that this truth is not 'sober'? Hoffman

invites the understanding that we are 'looking on at the products of a madman's imagination', whether it is that of Nathaniel or of the narrator. Freud's failure to engage with the self-reflexive dimension of Hoffman's text has already been shrewdly exposed in Neil Hertz's analysis, 'Freud and the Sandman' (Harari 1980). The text is not linear, and loops about upon itself. Nathaniel, like Schreber, is himself an author. He writes 'poems, fantasies, visions, novels, tales' (Hoffman 1982, 117) which prefigure the shapes his madness takes. He is called by Clara (his fiancé) the creator of a 'mad, senseless, insane story' (ibid., 106). The 'reader' is directly addressed, drawing attention to the manipulative quality of the fictional creation. The maker of the deceptive doll, Olympia, asserts that 'the whole thing is an allegory, an extended metaphor', which suggests that Hoffman is playing with the intellectually seductive and deceptive power of fictional narratives, which generate the need to discover symbol and significance. Most of the text is related by different characters in the epistolary mode. These figures also undertake to discuss Nathaniel's madness (his fears are 'phantoms of his own ego', ibid., 97). The narration of the frenzied *finale* is usurped by a strange intrusive 'author' figure, who, whilst telling the tale from Nathaniel's point-of-view ('Nathaniel awoke as if from a dreadful oppressive dream...' (ibid., 122) is also prepared to offer the objective description of Nathaniel as a 'raging madman' (ibid., 124), whose *view-point* is evidently suspect.

Freud's denial of 'intellectual uncertainty' is also a denial of the paranoid (or 'uncanny') power of the text to which his totalizing speculation is a direct response. His denial hinges upon the *consistency* of the reality status of events described, something that he himself establishes (and where there can be no reality beyond events treacherously

related in fiction, Freud's version of that 'reality' is delusional on his terms because it does not conform to any 'real' sequence of events). Apparently it is imperative that this process take place⁶, otherwise we may catch ourselves 'looking on at the products of a madman's imagination' without having been aware of his insanity. Fascinating though such products may be, they are also somehow 'unclean', that is to say 'taboo'⁶ even to the mind-doctor himself; madness itself is 'uncanny', something 'we do not know our way about in' – although ironically but predictably Freud intimates that it is long since he has 'experienced or heard of anything which has given him an uncanny impression' (1985b, 340).

Freud's contribution to modern conceptions of selfhood lies in the theorization of a self never fully present to itself, internally divided between the conscious and unconscious, never completely 'sane' – if this means wholly rational. Evidence of the presence and operation of the unconscious in the psychic economy may emerge in terms of textuality; where coherence and control fails and slips of the tongue mark the potential of the unconscious to disrupt the domain of the conscious, or where a lack of rational coherence indicates the condensation and displacement of repressed material in the psyche of the patient. Yet his 'detective' treatment of Schreber's and Hoffman's texts indicates that fundamental to *his* enterprise as a writer is the impulse to discover a way of reinstating continuity and unity, and that the essence of the 'cure' has to do with the location of an originating trauma and the further creation of (and, from his own perspective, conscious acceptance of) dynamic connections which once fully composed will actually exclude the possibility of 'madness' – psychic anarchy or dis-order. As Chabot observes:

Beyond its concern with the discontinuities of any life, with the disjunction between conscious and unconscious, between primary and

secondary thought processes, psychoanalysis also posits the radical continuity of that life (Chabot 1982, 64).

Lacan and Language

Jacques Lacan's later treatment of Schreber's text in his essay 'On a Question Preliminary to any Possible Treatment of Psychosis' (first published in 1959) marks a new perspective upon madness developing alongside more recent theoretical disciplines (and moving away from the initial biological or physiological basis of Freudian thought), notably those of linguistics and the derivative thought of structuralism and post-structuralism. Lacan earlier asked, in 'The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious' (1957),

how could a psychoanalyst of today not realize that speech is the key to that truth, when his whole experience must find in speech alone its instrument, its context, its material, and even the background noise of its uncertainties (Lacan 1977a, 147).

He decides that what is of importance in Freud's analysis of the *Memoirs* is the nature of the 'revealed' relation 'between the signifier and the subject' (1977b, 183). As Freud had already, apparently, formulated his theory of paranoia and used Schreber's paranoia to underwrite his story of the social dimension of the formation of the individual psyche, Lacan had already, apparently ('thirty years ago', *ibid.*, 184), formulated a theory of paranoia and — drawing upon linguistic and structuralist findings — uses the condition to demonstrate his theory of the linguistic construction of consciousness ('it is only after the linguistic analysis of the phenomenon of language that one can legitimately establish the relation that it constitutes in the subject' (*ibid.*, 187).

Freud wanted to offer, through his analysis of psychopathology, not only a way of identifying the roots of disturbance in the individual

psyche but of explaining the structures of Western civilization; psychoanalysis is able to 'throw light on the origins of our great cultural institutions – on religion, morality, justice and philosophy...' (1913, cf. Freud 1953, 185). Where Freud's methodology (if not his theory) based itself upon the search for truth and origin, Lacan's is based upon the impossibility of that origin and upon the radical discontinuity of the self, which is ultimately founded upon the discontinuity between signifier and signified. In 'The Future of an Illusion' (1927) Freud argues for the substitution of the delusional religious God with 'Our God, Λόγος' – the God of logic or reason – because 'in the long run nothing can withstand reason and experience, and the contradiction which religion offers to both is all too palpable' (Freud 1985a, 239). The God of logic has the task of re-stabilizing the world, and assuring the stability of individual identity within that world:

You have to defend the religious illusion with all your might. If it becomes discredited – and indeed the threat to it is great enough – then your world collapses. There is nothing left for you but to despair of everything, of civilization and the future of mankind. From that bondage I am, we are, free...We believe that it is possible for scientific work to gain some knowledge about the reality of the world...(Freud 1985a, 239)'.

This rule of reason is the very point at which Lacan, through his emphasis upon the unstable and constitutive rather than stable and descriptive role of language, departs from Freud – although he too is turning to a contemporary, apparently more rigorous 'scientific' endeavour to reframe psychoanalysis as an epistemological enterprise (language has 'attained the status of an object of scientific investigation', Lacan 1977a, 148).

Lacan says that 'it is the business of reason to recognize the drama of madness...because it is in man's relation to the signifier that this drama is situated' (1977b, 214). Structuralism teaches that signification

occurs only through the temporal and spatial deferral of meaning along a chain of signs – composed of signifier and signified – which bear no direct relation to one another or to 'reality'. Lacan names this semantic field the Symbolic and situates the creation of consciousness at the moment of entry into the Symbolic, which he maps on to the Freudian moment of enforced differentiation of the child from mother, world and ultimately self through the imposition of the incest taboo. The Symbolic is a network of discourses which *construct* the self as a subject along the chain of signifiers presided over by the 'Law of the Father'. That self (as 'signified') is subject to the endless deferral of meaning and thus never complete or identical with the self (as 'signifier') and always/already schismatic. Malcolm Bowie outlines the extent of Lacan's affiliation to modern theories of language;

Like any other form of discourse, 'theory' for Lacan is a chain, a skein, a stave, a weave of interconnected meaning-producing elements; it is born by hybridization; it inhabits time; it is perpetually in process. Wit, irony and ambiguity are immanent in it. The analyst who tries to jump clear of his own language as he uses it – or tries to build within that language a permanent conceptual home – is a charlatan or a fool. And Lacan's attempts to teach by example in this area, to be the knowing non-fool among psychoanalytic theorists, make his whole project seem remote from the Freudian ideas to which he repeatedly declares himself loyal (Bowie 1991, 12).

Bowie points out that Lacan goes so far as to make one of his recurrent purposes as a writer the amplification of theories 'to the point where they become deranged, to supercharge them with meaning in such a way that they no longer have uses or applications'. It is, he notes, as if Lacan is 'prepared to ask the question 'how useful is all this?' only when the theory in question has owned up to its own madness' (ibid., 35).

Where Freud makes the substitution of Schreber's father for Schreber's 'God', Lacan's terminology may be said to substitute Freud's

father with 'the Name-of-the-Father', something no longer bearing any direct connection to a real or biological father (and hence no longer part of a socially or 'scientifically' defined narrative) but becoming the principle of signification itself. Without wishing to present here a full transcript of Lacan's 'diagnosis' of Schreber's predicament (which would be an unsatisfactorily reductive activity as Lacan's mode of expression always seeks to remain open and exceed any meaning imposed upon it), it is sufficient to note that Lacan shifts the study of psychosis into a new frame. As in Freud's case, this frame does not confine Lacan to an insulated clinical sphere of activity, but through the focus upon signification allows the expansion of his theories into a study of the whole of Western culture, and ultimately encourages a hyperbolic mode of expression suggestive of cosmological intentions². Lacan interprets Freud's work on his own terms:

the slightest alteration in the relation between man and the signifier...changes the whole course of history by modifying the moorings that anchor his being.

It is precisely in this that Freudianism, however misunderstood it has been, and however confused its consequences have been, to anyone capable of perceiving the changes we have lived through in our own lives, is seen to have founded an intangible but radical revolution. There is no point in collecting witnesses to the fact: everything involving not just the human sciences, but the destiny of man, politics, metaphysics, literature, the arts, advertising, propaganda, and through these even economics, everything has been affected (1977a, 175).

Lacan characterizes both Schreber's experience and, beyond that, the experience of every individual as essentially 'paranoid' — in that the subject is always found to be alienated from itself in language³.

Schreber's experience is *psychotic* because of 'the failure of the paternal metaphor' (1977b, 215):

For the psychosis to be triggered off, the Name-of-the-Father, *verworfen*, foreclosed, that is to say, never having attained the place of the Other, must be called into symbolic opposition to the subject.

It is the lack of the Name-of-the Father in that place which, by the hole that it opens up in the signified, sets off the cascade of reshapings of the signifier from which the increasing disaster of the imaginary proceeds, to the point at which the level is reached at which signifier and signified are stabilized in a delusional metaphor (ibid., 217).

Moving out of the warp and weft of Lacan's discourse here, and back to Freud, it is interesting to note that Lacan's 'elaboration' upon Freud's work might, ironically, have been thought by Freud to be psychotic and to bear a strong relation to his own concept of schizophrenia. As Freud wrote in 1915:

If we ask ourselves what it is that gives the character of strangeness to the substitutive formations and the symptoms of schizophrenia, we eventually come to realize that it is the predominance of what has to do with words over what has to do with things (1957, 200).

This suggestion made by Freud, combined with Lacan's procedures and focus upon the splitting of the subject in language, may be said to inform recent theoretical characterizations of psychosis in terms of 'schizophrenia'". As John Forrester suggests, schizophrenic psychosis was not amenable to psychoanalysis (or analytical reconstruction) and its interpretative enterprise because,

the schizophrenic possesses a superfluity of words, a system of language that has been cut loose from any linkage with the unconscious thoughts controlled and directed by the activity of the ego...the schizophrenic loses the system of objects to which the word presentations attach. In either case, what appears on the surface of language, on that surface that consciousness perceives, is a salad of sterile fruits, cut off from the tree of thought (1980, 56).

Further Linguistic Approaches

Twentieth century psychiatry has provided a further perspective on insanity in studying schizophrenia through the analysis of linguistic usage by patients, or 'discourse analysis'". Where hysteria, neurosis and

paranoia were the main focus of Freud's attention, and where such pathological manifestations now seem representative of that era, it could be said that (outside of the work of Lacan) schizophrenia is the figurative psychopathology of the twentieth century. Many studies have been made of schizophrenics which confine themselves to the breakdown of syntactic and grammatical structures in schizophrenic speech and writing. These attempt to discover ways of diagnosing the condition, to categorize its symptoms and to render it a meaningful term by differentiating schizophrenia from other states. Such studies do not generally derive from structuralist theory but rely upon basic notions of cohesion, association and communication. Rochester and Martin, in *Crazy Talk*, observe that the term was coined 'in part, to describe discourse failures', noting Eugen Bleuler's reported experience of 'being a confused listener in the presence of incoherent speakers' (1979, 2). They base their study upon the fact that 'a failure to form "texts" - to produce stretches of language that seem coherent to the listener - has long been regarded as an essential characteristic of the schizophrenic speaker' (ibid., 73). A debate was begun that tried to decide whether the schizophrenic was first of all thought-disordered and therefore language disordered, or whether the reverse was the case. Nevertheless the widespread prevalence among patients of an inability to achieve coherence led to an acceptance of this as a basis upon which to start. Rochester and Martin use the rules of normal usage of the English language to distinguish departures from these rules in schizophrenics. Typical of the debate about schizophrenia are these suggestions taken from *The British Journal of Psychiatry*:

The performance of both highly creative and schizophrenic individuals is characterized by looser associations than that of low creative individuals (Dykes and McGhie 1976, 54).

With regard to word association literature, it is clear that schizophrenics emit remote and unusual associations, as do creatives. Some aspects of the schizophrenic seem to demonstrate a preference for the complex and the asymmetrical (Hasenfus and Magaro 1976, 346).

The schizophrenic patients, especially those who were thought-disordered, used fewer cohesive ties than other subjects, with the result that the links between phrases and clauses were often weak and tenuous. Secondly, the thought-disordered group showed marked abnormalities in their reference networks. Sometimes they would present new information but then fail to follow it up, so that the listener was left wondering what had become of the loose ends; and sometimes they would assume information they had not in fact given, or make ambiguous references to an earlier text, so that the listener was unable to trace the referent. What was happening, it seemed, was a failure to structure discourse in a way which the listener could understand and follow. The central problem, in other words, was not so much cognitive as social: failure or inability to take the role of the other (Rutter 1985, 400)¹².

Providing a summary of such experiments a list has been compiled of those headings under which schizophrenic discourse may be categorized, including 'looseness of association', 'gaps in communication' and 'lack of information', 'private meaning', 'vagueness of ideas', 'abrupt shifts in time', 'repetition' and the 'reiteration of ideas without direction', known as 'perseveration' (Reilly 1975, 242).

The significance for literature of these approaches to insanity lies in the fact that, after Freud, the key to the enigma of psychotic behaviour was located in language in this way, both by psychoanalysis and by psychiatry. Whether schizophrenia existed before it was named is a moot point; this concentration upon linguistics invites speculation as to whether it is not the creation of twentieth century scientific concerns, and of whether, and why it is apparently a characteristically twentieth century phenomenon in this guise. Such questions can generate a multiplicity of hypotheses, but this brief cultural contextualization of twentieth century fictional treatments of madness is intended, within the confines of this study, merely to underline the contiguity of the literary

shift in the narrative presentation of madness with conceptual developments in its diagnosis and treatment in the ideational arena from which it emerges'³.

Laing and Anti-Psychiatry

R. D. Laing is renowned for his vehement rejection of the idea that schizophrenia is an illness that modern science can cure. He argued that schizophrenia is the creation of modern society; that is to say that it is society that drives the individual to schizophrenic behaviour, and that until that society is transformed schizophrenia will not be 'curable'. Neither will it be an illness, but a reaction to current pressures upon the individual or a protective response. As Edgar Z. Friedenberg concludes, Laing brings the study of madness firmly into the arena of social criticism, concluding that 'mental illness is generated by hostile and dishonest manipulation of individuals who cannot escape the role of victim' (1974, 19). Laing's *The Divided Self*, first published in 1960, was written with the purpose of making 'madness, and the process of going mad comprehensible...in plain English, in *existential* terms' (Laing 1965, 9), has proved to be a seminal text for recent cultural criticism, philosophy, theory and fiction'⁴. Though setting himself up in opposition to the 'exclusively *intrapersonal*' (ibid., 42) – rather than interpersonal – bias of Freud, Laing might be said to have built gradually upon Freud's intimations of the profound psychic discontent of the civilized toward a far more polemical and critical position. For Laing, every schizophrenic individual in Western society represents a generic condition of man 'cut off from his own mind, cut off equally from his own body – a half-crazed creature in a mad world' (ibid., 43). Laing's 'existential' picture of the

schizoid individual involves the idea of a being

the totality of whose experience is split in two main ways: in the first place, there is a rent in his relation with his world and, in the second, there is a disruption of his relation with himself (ibid., 18).

The emphasis, however, is not upon the patient's own dysfunctional relationship to an objective reality, but upon the falsification of the self produced by the subject's existence within a particular social configuration. Such a person is not able 'to experience himself "together with" others or "at home in" the world, but, on the contrary, he experiences himself in despairing aloneness and isolation'¹⁵.

Morton Schatzman has produced an in-depth study of Schreber's text pursuing the Laingian approach to madness. Schatzman's study, *Soul Murder: Persecution in the Family* (1973) shifts the focus from Schreber's psychosis to Schreber's biography, his family relationships and social environment. Basically, Schatzman attributes the cause of Schreber's disturbance (the 'murder of his soul') to his treatment by his own culturally influential and highly disciplinarian father. He points out that Freud (and the same is true of Lacan) ignored the evidence available of Schreber's childhood persecution at the hands of his father. Dr. Daniel Gottlieb Moritz Schreber published extensively on the themes of the correct way to train ('suppress', as Schatzman decides) children, on the correct social behaviour as the healthiest and most 'God-fearing' way to live. Schatzman's book is about '*politics*: the micro-politics of child-rearing and family life and their relation to the macro-politics of larger human groups' (1973, 10). Schreber's father is seen not only in his biological role but as an agent and node in a network of discursive structures which subject and control the individual:

Given Dr. Schreber's views about the parts fathers do and must play

in families, it is likely he held God-like power in his family. Family members, who connected his presence with God's, were probably presenting the family power system in cosmic terms. And the father, seen by them as God, and enacting the role of God, taught them with his 'divine' authority that God is Father. Dr. Schreber urged parents to urge, encourage, and induce children to be devoted to God...If a child's father is his God, and he learns everything which transcends his power rests upon God's, then his father's power over him increases even more. I propose (as Freud did) that the author of the *Memoirs* transfigured the father of his childhood into the God of his 'nervous illness' (ibid., 16).

Through his research Schatzman aims to prove that many of Schreber's experiences only thinly veil actual emotions and experiences undergone at the hands of his maniacally repressive father. Schreber, Schatzman points out, 'was born into a conspiracy against him' (ibid., 143). That social conspiracy turns out to be far more insidious and threatening than anything Schreber could dream up to disguise or explain it. He was enmeshed in an a ubiquitous, authoritarian webwork of power and values which, as Schatzman discovers, are always in place in any fascist, patriarchal state in whose interest it is to perpetuate (perpetrate) a system of power relations which are psychically interiorized by the individual, and within which the majority are oppressed. Chillingly Schatzman warns, 'Remember Hitler and his peers were raised when Dr. Schreber's books, preaching household totalitarianism, were popular' (ibid., 151). He attempts to place Freud's theory within what he thinks is its 'relevant ideological setting'. Freud, because he was caught within it, was blind to it, 'the authoritarian, patriarchal nineteenth century family was one of the conditions in which psychoanalysis developed and which it has sometimes seemed to embody' (ibid., 114).

Schatzman then, adopts Laing's¹⁶ position against psychiatry and psychoanalysis as practices which — if only by remaining uncritical — support the social structures which cause that which they attempt to cure.

The 'origin' of madness must be looked for not in the patient's psyche but in the world in which he exists and functions:

It has been a thesis of this book that people considered paranoid experience as persecution what people around them experience differently. Feelings of persecution are no less prevalent in Western Society than anywhere else, as far as I know. Therefore you would be mistaken to think what I have been saying applies only to the Nazis, Soviet Russia...and not to Us (ibid., 157).

The alternative theoretical and ideological approaches to madness which I have outlined here find their counterpart or dramatization to some extent in kinds of fiction which seem increasingly to explore exceptional psychic states from the position of the 'mad'. The biographical-narrative, linguistic and social emphases of these studies connect with different levels of expression in the representative texts examined in parts I and II.

NOTES

General Introduction

1. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), for example, expresses the Romantic preoccupation with the operation of the imaginative faculties when liberated from the tyranny of reason;

The thought suggested itself...that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in *this* sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency (1973, 5).

2. In their *Declaration* of January 27th, 1925 (the manifesto of *Le Bureau de Recherches Surréalistes*) leading Surrealists express their crede by saying that Surrealism is 'a means of total liberation of the mind *and of all that resembles it*'. They wish to 'show the fragility of thought, and on what shifting foundations, what caverns we have built our trembling houses'. Surrealism, they assert, 'is not a poetic form. It is a cry of the mind turning back upon itself, and it is determined to break apart its fetters...' (quoted in the collection of extracts from manifestos by Maurice Nadeau in *The History of Surrealism*, 1973, 240).

3. As demonstrated by Roger Smith in *Trial by Medicine: Insanity and Responsibility in Victorian Trials* (1981). He sees the increasing legal interest in madness as contributing to the developing scientific and professional status of the study of madness. From the end of the eighteenth century criminal trials began to make use of new medical evidence as to the sanity of the accused. Smith proposes that this cultural development culminated in two 1845 Acts which demanded the building of county asylums and marked the growth of psychiatry as a new medical specialism (1981, 3). Madness, as a principle of chaos, began to function as a challenge to the positivistic

scientific enterprise, and to the organizational capability of 'civilized society'.

Smith observes that,

The asylum movement exemplified a new pattern of social control. A new group with professional expectations, under a central administration, directed specialist institutions for inmates whose lived experience was of routine, discipline and work...Treatment of the insane, perhaps the most abject embodiments of suffering, became a potent symbol of society's ability to regulate its affairs (1981, 4-5).

4. For a fuller discussion of the difficult place of insanity in current legal procedure see Jennifer Radden's discussion of M'Naghten's Rule and legal tradition (1985, 121-138).
5. See Seymour Chatman's *Story and Discourse* (1978, 253-62). This is a useful term here; it is appropriate to an approach which needs to keep some distance between the idea of the empirical reader and the reader or addressee *evoked* by the discourse of the narrator. As Chatman points out, the narratee may be understood to be either 'intradiegetic' (within the frame of the story) or 'extradiegetic' (external to the story) (1978, 254).
6. For a fuller discussion of clinical procedures in this regard see R. P. Bentall, *Reconstructing Schizophrenia* (1990, 43-45).
7. The Schreber case is of added significance because it punctuates a chronological view of the literary treatment of madness and marks changes in modern patterns of thought (including but not confined to psychology). The occasion of the case, the writing of the text, the later rewriting of the text by Freud, the recent rewriting of Freud and Schreber by Jacques Lacan (1959, cf. 1977b), Morton Schatzman (1973) and Gilles Deleuze (1972, cf. 1984) all now contribute to the text's centrality in the ongoing 'rational' discourse about the nature of madness. Though appropriated by psychiatric discourse Schreber's text was initially intended by him to be widely published. The work is the author's account of what he believes to be the facts of his insanity, transcribed into a form judged by him to bridge the gap between a 'sane'

reader, and an 'insane' writer. It is a statement of subjective experience. Most importantly - as I hope to show - it suggests correlations between writing about madness (the fictional mode), the writing of madness (the memoirs of a madman), and the madness of writing.

8. See also appendix above. This has been added with the intention of providing a point of reference for part II, where such material would hinder the elaboration of the central argument. Some influential twentieth century approaches to psychosis are outlined here, *in so far as* they bear relevance to the main thrust of the project or refer directly to the Schreber case. The main ideas treated are those of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan and R. D. Laing.

9. Trilling comments upon the modern view (tracing its rise through the theories of Freud and Laing, and an increase in cases of psychosis) that 'insanity is a state of human existence which is to be esteemed for its commanding authenticity' and points out that 'the doctrine that madness is health, that madness is liberation and authenticity, receives a happy welcome from a consequential part of the educated public' (1972, 168).

10. Jameson discusses 'schizophrenic disjunction' as a a 'generalized cultural style' (1984, 74).

11. Brooke-Rose introduces *A Rhetoric of the Unreal* with a comment upon a pervasive loss of reality; 'the sense that empirical reality is not as secure as it used to be is now pervasive at all levels of society. Certainly what used to be called empirical reality, or the world, seems to have become more and more unreal, and what has long been regarded as unreal is more and more turned to or studied as the only 'true' or 'another and equally valid' reality. Witness, for example, Foucault on madness (1961), Laing on schizophrenia as a breakthrough (1967)...Shoshanna Felman (1978)' (1981, 4).

12. She adds that madness 'usually occupies a position of *exclusion*, it is *outside* of the culture. But madness that is a *common* place occupies a position of *inclusion* and becomes inside of a culture', and to the extent that 'our entire era...has become

subsumed within the space of madness' (and consequently contributes to this trend with *Writing and Madness*, approaching fictional works through the lens of 'madness' as it has been theorized in philosophy and psychoanalysis). She focusses upon what she sees as the modern 'rise' of madness and the demise of 'literature' from the perspective of current philosophical, post-structuralist and psychoanalytical thought. She concludes, from this position, that 'while it was through literature that madness became the order of the day, now it seems that literature itself has been dropped from the agenda. While madness has finally been recognized as a burning contemporary question, it is as though the question of literature has become anachronistic and irrelevant' (Felman 1985, 15). She counters this trend by theorizing an intrinsic link between the nature of literature and the nature of madness. This link, she concludes, lies in their equivalent 'resistance to interpretation' (ibid., 254). She closes her analysis by tackling the significance of the term 'madness' as she has used it:

What is the rhetorical status of the term 'madness' in my own critical and theoretical discourse? Is madness used here in its literal sense or is it simply a metaphor?

The texts studied in this book do not permit a simple, unambiguous answer to that question. Whether they discuss psychosis, neurosis, or simply the stereotypical, stylistic usage of the term 'madness', the texts about madness baffle our preconceived notions about the rhetorical status of the madness they both express and put in question...I would like to open up the following question: might it not be possible to define the very specificity of literature as that which *suspends the answer* to the question of knowing whether the madness literature speaks of is literal or figurative? The specific property of the thing called literature is such, in other words, that the rhetorical status of its madness can no longer be determined (ibid., 253).

Felman's question, acknowledging that different kinds of madness may be represented in fiction, supposes that there is a possible literal sense in which the term maybe used. In so far as there is, my discussion proceeds on the basis that it must be rooted in the meaning attached to the term within a given historical or cultural context; it is context-bound, and as such may not be, other than in the most abstract sense, interpreted 'to the letter'. The opposition called into play by Shoshana Felman is itself made operative within the discourses with which Felman wishes to engage in her

use of fictional texts. She is interested in 'the question that literature, from its unique position, invites us to ask and that, from its unique position it addresses to psychiatry, psychoanalysis, biology and linguistics' (Felman 1985, 254). Madness as she uses it, is defined by and against these discourses. Ultimately Felman's question must be situated, within the scope of this thesis, as symptomatic of current theoretical trends in the 'uses' of madness.

13. As N. Takei da Silva observes in *Modernism and Virginia Woolf*,

Modern, and above all Modernist, fiction which made use of or, more often, was inspired by, psychoanalysis may indeed be considered the spiritual descendent of Gothicism in that it was motivated by the same concern with man's inner life as the latter, which was the very reason for using, or being affected by, psychoanalysis, and that both reacted against the prevailing mode of external realism, which they considered to be stifling and ignoring this side of human reality. This awareness, or concern, thus may be said to be the essential factor that interrelates Modernism, the Gothic Novel (which may be considered the earliest manifestation of Romanticism), and Freudian psychology (1990, 39-40).

Although I chose to avoid having this study turn upon the theories of psychoanalysis, my subject *has* - in line with this perception - resulted in a selection of works in the gothic and modernist, rather than realist tradition.

PART I

Introduction: Madness and Gothic Fiction

1. This general perspective on Gothic literature is also taken up by Eugenia C. Delamotte, in her study of Gothic fiction. She suggests that,

Gothic terror has its primary source in an anxiety about boundaries and...Gothic romance offers a symbolic language congenial to the expression of psychological, epistemological, religious, and social anxieties that resolve themselves most fundamentally into a concern about the boundaries of the self (1990, 14).

2. Critics of Freud's interpretation include Hunter and Macalpine in the introduction to their English translation of Schreber's *Memoirs* (1955, cf. Schreber 1988), Morton Schatzman in *Soul Murder* (1973), Jacques Lacan, 'On a question preliminary to any

possible treatment of psychosis' (1959, cf. 1977b), C. Barry Chabot, *Freud on Schreber: Psychoanalytic Theory and the Critical Act* (1982), Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972, cf. 1983), Alice Jardine in *Gynesis* (1985), commentators and critics of the 'post-modern', critics concerned with the Gothic genre and the psychoanalytical interpretation of paranoia include E. K. Sedgwick (1985).

3. See appendix for a fuller discussion of Freud's reading of Schreber's *Memoirs*.

1. D. P. Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*: A Model

1. Page references to Schreber's text will follow the *original* pagination, *as provided alongside the text in the 1988 reprint* of the 1955 first translated edition. In this chapter, as in each chapter which takes *a single text* as its focus, the author's name and the date of publication of that text will not be unnecessarily repeated where there is a string of references to the same text. References will be to the edition of that text detailed in the bibliography. Original dates of publication are mentioned in the introduction, within each chapter, and also supplied in the bibliography. These notes will not be used for full bibliographical references, since this thesis follows the Author-Date system as directed in the *MHRA Style Book* (which advises, 'a combination of conventional notes and the Author-Date system is unnecessarily cumbersome for the reader and should not be contemplated').

2. God is to be regarded in a discussion of the *Memoirs* as a concept in inverted commas because, as Schreber points out (Schreber 1988, 20), his idea of God differs considerably from that of the Christian tradition, except in so far as God is the creator of the universe and the supreme being.

3. For a slightly different perspective upon a similar phenomena see Shoshanna Felman's discussion of Nerval's *Aurélia*. Nerval set out in this work to give account of his own experience of madness. Her starting point in the discussion is Foucault's attempt to 'say madness' and she compares this with a 'madman's' literary, essentially

aesthetic enterprise. Felman points out that Nerval represents himself both as 'ill' and as extraordinarily healthy, the privileged possessor of a massive amount of knowledge;

It is through this uneasiness of feeling double, through this very division of the self, that the speaker here affirms the (impossible) necessity of overcoming, by the very practice of his discourse, the linguistic separation between health and illness, between reason and madness. The use of the pronoun *I* consequently becomes very complex in the narrative of *Aurélia*: in a process of constant splitting, the *I* stands for two distinct characters: the hero - and the narrator. The hero is a 'madman'; the narrator, a man who has recovered his 'reason' (Felman 1985, 66-7).

4. This defense became a legal one when the psychiatrist Dr. Weber, superintendant of the asylum in which Schreber is confined, decided to submit his work to a court summoned to deliberate upon whether Schreber should be released from the asylum and readmitted to society:

In line with the patient's originally rich gifts, his mental productivity and his wide education, the manifestations of his pathologically altered mind are not, as so frequently in other cases, poor and monotonous and their connections easily surveyed: on the contrary they present a structure of ideas so fantastically elaborated and developed and so far removed from the usual trends of thought, that it is hardly possible to sketch them briefly without rendering their inner structure incomprehensible and impairing understanding of their specific meaning. For this reason...I consider it useful to give to the Country Court the patient's 'Memoirs' complete for their consideration...in the belief that the Judge will readily obtain a clear picture of the author's mental state without any further comment (Schreber 1988, 394).

5. Schreber is using a conventional strategy that the fictionists in this study will be shown to use, in a similarly exaggerated manner, in dealing with subject matter that more than usually threatens the internal 'truth status' of their fictional texts - the supernatural.

6. With regard to the issues discussed in the pages to follow, plainly Freudian and Lacanian approaches would have more to say on the matter. My intention here is confined to the consideration of the *mechanics* of Schreber's own view of the man/woman relation.

7. This opposition is often considered (to have been made) the key one in rational

nodes of thought,

Some writers have claimed that this is the primordial opposition on which all others are based and that...the aim of logocentrism, though it could not admit it, has always been to found phallogocentrism, to assure a rationale for a masculine order...Whether or not it is the paradigm of metaphysical oppositions, man/woman is certainly a distinction whose hierarchical structure is marked in an endless number of ways, from the genetic account in the Bible...(Culler 1983, 165).

This kind of thinking extends to other means of defining a stable world for Schreber.

It is even the key to moral questions. Here the dominant structuring principle is the strong/weak opposition,

In the whole domain of the created world, no one considers it immoral when - as long as it does not contravene the Order of the World - the stronger conquers the weaker, a people of higher culture expel from their abode one of lower culture...In any case the whole idea of morality can arise only within the Order of the World, that is to say within the natural bond which holds God and mankind together; wherever the Order of the World is broken, power alone counts, and the right of the stronger is decisive. In my case moral obliquity lay in God placing Himself outside the Order of the World by which he himself must be guided (Schreber 1988, 60).

8. It is not, perhaps, *homosexuality* which triggers the onset of paranoia (as Freud suggested), but sexuality is nevertheless a determining factor in Schreber's delusional construct. The experience of sensuality in Schreber is discovered in, and confined to, his own body (it is narcissistic). Freud perceives this as deviant (or considers that Schreber's superego must condemn it as such) because it does not fit into an institutionalized heterosexual structure. It seems that in Schreber's world - the one in which he functions as Judge Schreber, a man of authority and intellect - no space is made for sensuality, narcissism, or sensitivity except within the idea of the feminine (being 'passive', 'castrated', 'powerless'). Evidence has been amassed to the effect that Schreber's famous father drummed such ideas into his son's head with some severity and some rather cruel implements (see Morton Schatzman's challenging biographical investigation, as discussed above in the appendix). In his essay on Schreber Freud professes admiration for Schreber's father, speaking of his 'promoting the harmonious upbringing of the young', his 'great reputation' and suitability for being turned into

a God 'in the affectionate memory of a son' (Freud 1979, 51), and thus becoming the prototypical object of homosexual desire. Schatzman's study renders all such comments rather ironic (if anything his desire might be more aptly described as masochistic, or transexual rather than homosexual). His pathologically authoritarian father's main aim was to subdue the will of his children absolutely and completely to his own (admittedly a God-like attribute), and to discover how many different methods of physical repression and abuse could he could use to subdue their bodies to automata. Many of of the somatic delusions suffered by Schreber have convincingly been linked by Schatzman to actual diagrams drawn by Schreber senior of modes of restraining children's movement and growth. Schreber's text may be seen as 'uncanny' according to a definition used by Freud that what should have remained hidden, what is *unheimlich*, is being brought to light. Schreber's father set himself up as a kind of supernatural omnipotence in his son's life, aligning himself with God as a patriarchal law-giver. Schreber's whole delusional system is at once revelatory of this relationship and an expression of 'irrational fear', concealing the fact that it is a forbidden fear of something 'real'.

9. For example;

My breast gives the impression of a pretty well-developed female bosom; this phenomena can be *seen* by anybody who wants to observe me *with his own eyes*. I am therefore in a position to offer objective evidence by observation of my body...I venture to assert flatly that anybody who sees me standing in front of a mirror...I believe I have thus furnished proof which must arouse serious doubt among serious men as to whether what has so far been attributed to hallucinations and delusions is not after all reality, and therefore my whole belief in their miraculous nature and my explanation of the phenomena on my person and on my body not also founded on truth...(Schreber 1988, 280).

10. For further discussion of the implications of this term in connection with paranoia and wider psychological, sociological, methodological and metaphysical issues see the work of Y. Fried and J. Agassi in *Paranoia: A study in Diagnosis* (1976).

11. The body and sexuality have been used as metaphors for a variety of symbolic forces in recent theories about narrative, 'to make the body the centre of the symbolic field is [to say it is] an image of the force which ultimately subjugates other

meanings' (Culler 1975, 227), and it is in this sense that Schreber's activity may be understood as *recuperative*. Weber comments in his introduction to the work with regard to the construction of his text,

if it is thus in the nature of miracles [the action of or upon nerves] to destroy the body's integrity – be it Schreber's body or an inorganic one – then this integrity can be re-established through the text that renames all *Wunden* to *Wunder* and reduces the latter to their cause, a text that ultimately consists in their re-absorption in Schreber's body. For this reason, the body constitutes the ultimate goal of the *Memoirs*' composition and publication...this *scientific* work has no other goal than to proffer its author's body...as an object of viewing' (Schreber 1988, xlviii).

12. He also reads the text as uncanny according to a sense of the word that he himself takes on board in his essay dealing with that subject. He sees that through careful interpretation of the text 'things hidden' are brought to light. That is, 'the exciting cause of his illness...an outburst of homosexual libido' (1979, 177).

13. For a further treatment of Freud's response to Schreber's text see the appendix above, 'Freud and Narrative'. This positions Freud's constructions in relation to the immediate narratological concerns of this thesis, whilst avoiding entanglement with the psychoanalytical merits of his approach.

2. Plotting Damnation: James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*

1. It is a curious anomaly that nineteenth century thought about the nature of madness often recognized it in terms of indecorous, amoral and anti-social behaviour, and that despite this it was still expected that madness conform in some measure to 'the limitations imposed on man by society'. This is witnessed by Dr. Weber's (Schreber's psychiatrist) comments upon the *Memoirs* as containing an 'abundance of indiscretions relating to himself and others', and 'the unembarrassed detailing of the most doubtful and aesthetically impossible situations and events, the use of the most offensive vulgar words, etc.' (Schreber 1988, 402).

2. An interesting comparison may be found in Schreber's idea of the 'writing-down-system', '*Books or other notes* are kept in which for years have been *written-down* all my thoughts, all my phrases, all my necessities, all the articles in my possession or around me, all persons with whom I come into contact, etc' (emphasis Schreber's, 122).
3. John Herdman provides a fuller discussion of the historical links between Christianity and Protestantism, and the literary 'double' in *The Double in Nineteenth Century Fiction* ('The Psychological and Theological background'; 1990, 1-11). He aims to create an understanding 'of the complex history of moral duality in the Western Christian tradition, and of the elements of dualism as a metaphysical position within orthodox, and even more markedly within heterodox Christianity' (1990, 4).
4. The analysis by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick of *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1985, 92-117), whilst not focussing upon Hogg's narrative strategy, takes the paranoiac content, the thought processes of characters and the paranoid nature of relationships between them, toward a view of this novel as an exploration of 'social and gender constitution as a whole' (ibid., 115). Starting from the Freudian reading of the Schreber case (paranoia as the result of repressed homosexuality), but rejecting the hierarchical evaluation which situates homosexuality as deviance or 'illness', Sedgwick forwards a reading of the 'paranoid' text which might be constructively applied not only to Hogg but to many other works, including those of Poe (*Gordon Pym*), and Stevenson ('The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde') which display a similar focus upon male experience (remaining significantly immune to female interception) within patriarchal social structures. Robert Wringhim's paranoia is founded in, she suggests, social pressures brought to bear;

The internal sociophobic pressures on young Robert have the effect, not in the first place of repressing a pre-existent genital desire within him toward men, but of making him an excruciatingly *responsive* creature and instrument of class, economic and gender struggles that long antedate his birth. As he pushes blindly, with the absurdly and pathetically few resources he has, toward the male homosocial mastery that alone and delusively seem to promise him a social

standing, the psychologized homophobic struggle inside him seems to hollow out an internal space that too exactly matches the world around him (1985, 114).

Caught between the conflicted external relationships with other men and the class structure, and the delusional internal relationships (taking the form of the demonic double and 'God's' schema), Robert becomes 'a mere murderous potential, violent against, women and men alike, and capable of being seized and used by and in the service of any social force' (ibid., 114). This political dimension of the paranoid text has not been, but must potentially be, connected to the factors focussed upon in this analysis. The 'release' of madness engineered by the narrative process, if combined with Sedgwick's cultural analysis, would further develop a perspective upon such texts that render their contrapuntal schema and almost viral invasion of areas of cultural anxiety and uncertainty a potential anarchic power-house. On this level the internal configuration that evolves in Wringhim's mind as a nightmarish mirror of external structures, is refracted back - via the surfaces of the text - onto that external plane. Thus such texts are not only explorations but assaults, exercising a peculiarly effective power of epistemological distortion, or defamiliarization of a possibly liberational kind (in this way they connect with the contemporary writing discussed in the general conclusion).

3. Plotting the Unearthly: Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*

1. This is the 1975 reprint of the first American publication of 1838, with a minimum of amendment. The 'original' title page appears in this edition on page 42.
2. The journey of the soul figured forth in the image of the sailor in a ship is almost archetypal, as for example in the anglo-saxon poem *The Seafarer* (*The Exeter Book*, c.975). This epic poem tells the story of an outcast on the high seas suffering

extreme physical and mental distress, even to the point of hallucination.

3. Beaver points out that Poe had been, shortly before writing *Gordon Pym*, engaged in reviewing many pamphlets and articles dealing in travel and exploration (in addition to reviewing *The Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*; Poe 1975, 10). He was also apparently preoccupied by a theory developed by a mariner, John Cleves Symmes, and published in manifesto form in 1818, that supposed the Poles to be holes. Symmes's theory was followed up, in the course of the next few decades, by further writings, explorations, and published records of these voyages (Poe 1975, 11-14). B. R. Pollin also suggests that a major source for the text was the 'very popular genre of chronicles or tales of mariners, purporting to be the crude and often unedited, first-hand accounts of storms and shipwrecks, fires, mutinies, and famine', which were 'invariably based upon verifiable occurrences first reported in journals and broadsides': these narratives were produced in collections and individually 'as cheap pamphlets in England from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries and in nineteenth century America' (Poe 1981, 19).

4. As Wolfgang Iser suggests, during the process of reading

We are situated inside the literary text. The relation between text and reader is therefore quite different from that between object and observer: instead of a subject-object relationship, there is a moving viewpoint which travels along *inside* that which it has to apprehend...every moment of reading is a dialectic of protension and retention, conveying a future horizon yet to be occupied, along with a past (and continually fading) horizon already filled, the wandering viewpoint carves its passage through both at the same time and leaves them to merge together in its wake. There is no escaping this process... (1978, 110-112).

5. Curiously, Harold Beaver suspects Poe's interest in the fact that Symmes's 'Symzonia', his hypothetical land at the Antarctic Pole, was peopled with a perfectly *rational* race.

6. The text is divided in this way: Preface, 43-45, preliminary tale, 47-56 (comprising chapter 1), main narrative, 57-239, 'editor's' note, 240-242.

7. In his analysis of the Schreber case Freud identifies this mechanism as 'paranoid

projection', observing that is it 'the most striking characteristic of symptom-formation'. He describes it in these terms:

An internal perception is suppressed, and, instead, its content, after undergoing certain kind of distortion, enters consciousness in the form of an external perception (1979, 204).

He later amends this by adding that 'what was abolished internally returns from without' (ibid., 210). He points out however, that this paranoiac function is really only an exaggeration of the normal 'attitude towards the external world'.

10. Pym's arrival on the island of Tsalal in the Southern-most regions of the globe initiates another sequence of black imagery. The complexion of the native people 'was a jet black' (Poe 1975, 189). They are 'clothed in the skins of an unknown black animal', their weapons consist of 'clubs of a dark and apparently very heavy wood', the bottoms of the canoes 'were full of black stones' (190). The bay into which they sail has a 'black sandy bottom' (193). The huts are made of black animal skins. The adventurers notice 'several animals...covered with a black wool' (196). Drawing fleetingly upon an intertextual burden of signification (recalling the obsessional narration of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*) Pym sees a 'black albatross' (196).

11. J. W. Robertson says:

Evidently Pym had become entangled in such a maze of unescapable disasters that Poe was not able to invent a *deus ex machina* which could snatch him from his impending doom (1969, 174).

12. Critical responses to these texts are to be further discussed in the conclusion to Part I.

4. Plotting the Diabolical: Robert Louis Stevenson's 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde'

1. It seems relevant to discuss Jekyll's predicament in philosophical and linguistic terms considering that it is essentially the *single* meaning of a word, and its incompatibility with the complexity of his experience that is at stake here. Good can

only be wholly present in the complete *absence* of its negation, bad. In terms of current theoretical thought this follows logocentrism, where 'situated on the margin of the first term, the second term designates an undesirable, dispensible deviation' (Culler 1975, 160). A deconstructive reading demonstrates that each is at the centre - a trace of - the other. Jekyll's discovery is most significantly a 'potent control'; it enables him to 'dissolve the bonds of obligation' (Stevenson 1979, 83), to break apart the interdependency of this opposition, to enable a word to *mean* purely and metaphysically without the movement of *différance*. Both sides of himself must be enabled to operate freely and independently, apparently unmodified by the intervention of the other.

2. This may be read with reference to note 4 of the previous section, regarding Wolfgang Iser's suggestion of the 'moving viewpoint'. Any distinction that seems to be drawn between narrator and reader here should be understood as qualified on this basis.

Conclusion: Provocative Narratives and the Paranoid Text

1. Or as Rowe rather cryptically suggests in his analysis of *Gordon Pym* language may still appear to be a limitation for Poe that 'veils' a signified behind and within the ambiguous drift of signifiers leading to the end of the journey. But it is not a 'veiled' but a 'shrouded' figure baring the winding sheet of finitude that is at once disclosed and repressed in the supplementary movement of psychic signification' (Rowe 1977, 119).

2. Poe's *Eureka* (written in 1828, ten years before *Gordon Pym*) is offered, as he terms it, as a 'Book of Truths'. It is concerned with 'the Physical, Metaphysical and Mathematical - [and] the Material and Spiritual Universe: - [...] its Essence, its Origin, its Creation, its Present Condition and its Destiny'. Poe introduces this saying he will be so rash 'as to challenge the conclusions, and thus, in effect, to question the sagacity, of many of the greatest and most justly revered of men' (Poe

1965, 185). In this text Poe attacks the methodology of contemporary scientists and philosophers (the 'diggers and pedlars of minute *facts*', - in a similar way Schreber defends himself from 'tumbling with both feet into the camp of naked materialism'). *Eureka* proposes a process for achieving a knowledge of *the truth about God, the Universe, and man's position in relation to these concepts*, a process which conflicts with 'pedestrian' empirical modes of thought. The text is teleological, attempting to communicate his belief that 'each soul is, in part, its own God - its own creator; - in a word, that God - the material and spiritual God - now exists solely in the diffused Matter and Spirit of the Universe' (ibid., 313). The process of attaining truth is focussed upon consistency; '*a perfect consistency can be nothing but an absolute truth*' (ibid., 196).

'speculate' - 'theorize' - these are the terms...I repeat, speculate - theorize - and their theories are merely corrected - reduced - sifted - cleared, little by little, of their chaff of inconsistency - until at length there stands apparent an unencumbered *Consistency* - a consistency which the most stolid admit - because it is a consistency - to be an absolute and unquestionable *Truth* (ibid., 196).

Poe is advocating an intuitively based, systematic thought process. The goal of his system is to become consistent, and therein lies truth. Consistency, however, is an ongoing process - an infinite condition, it does not, he says, require a 'finishing stroke' (ibid., 203), a closure, an answer. Only by 'foreclosing closure' can the system be complete. Poe discusses the propensity of theologians 'and others' to be always searching for a 'First Cause': 'A First Cause. And what is a First Cause? An ultimate termination of causes. And what is an ultimate termination of causes? Finity - the Finite' (ibid., 202). Man's inability to think beyond the finite leaves him as a creature alienated from God, and without Godliness; with a limited intellect and without hope of ever comprehending his existence and creation. Poe is establishing a rationale for what is essentially a paranoid thought process, a form of 'compulsive thinking';

He who has a right to say that he thinks *at all*, feels himself called upon, not to entertain a conception, but simply to direct his mental vision toward some

given point, in the intellectual firmament, where lies a nebula never to be resolved. To solve it, indeed, he makes no effort; for with a rapid instinct he comprehends, not only the impossibility, but, as regards all human purposes, the *inessentiality*, of its solution. He perceives that the Deity has not *designed* it to be solved. He sees, at once, that it lies *out* of the brain of man, and even *how*, if not exactly *why*, it lies out of it (Poe 1965, 204).

3. Edgar Allan Poe, 'A Few Words on Secret Writing' (July, 1841), 'Secret Writing' (August, 1841), 'Secret Writing' (October, 1841), 'Secret Writing' (December, 1841) in Poe 1965, 114-132, 133-137, 138-140, 140-149.

4. As Harold Beaver records in his notes to the 1979 edition of *Gordon Pym*, these writers include Jules Verne, Charles Dake, and H. P. Lovecraft (*Le Sphinx des Glaces*, 1864, *A Strange Discovery*, 1899, and *At the Mountains of Madness*, 1936; Poe 1979, 269).

5. In her discussion of contemporary literary treatment of madness Evelyn Keitel concludes by viewing the relationship between psychosis and creativity in a general sense. Her emphasis is firmly upon the reader's *emotional* response to texts, and she has recourse to Freud's theories of creativity and the unconscious. Her comments upon the production of anxiety as a structuring principle of the text are useful here;

The communicatory situation between text and reader in the literary type of psychopathography extrapolates 'anxiety' into the reader's response...A sense of an enveloping oppression felt during the reading, a sensation of being trapped in the text, is further enhanced by the virtual dimension of the literary type of psychopathography. This virtual dimension comprises proliferations of phantasies relating to the subject, which are expansive factors, as well as intertextual references to the conventions of the mediating texts...the intertextual references are ambivalent inasmuch as they - at least initially - counteract a strongly negative, because suspended, openness by evoking stabilizing reading experiences. The reader's expectation of stabilization, however is thwarted, and the disappointment of his expectations reinforces his sense of an enveloping oppression to an even greater degree (Keitel 1989, 118).

6. For an analysis of the manner in which Schreber's text has functioned as a paranoid text in the interpretation offered by his most influential reader, Sigmund Freud, see appendix.

PART II

Introduction: Madness and Modern Fiction

1. 'We generally distinguish, within the literary Gothic, two tendencies: that of the supernatural explained (the 'uncanny')...and that of the supernatural accepted (the 'marvellous')' (Todorov 1975, 42-3).
2. This term is used to indicate not the absence of logic, but a thought process which imitates the operation of logic, whilst failing in its usual enterprise - to be recognizably 'reasonable' and to achieve 'truth'.
3. See appendix for further exploration of Freud's, and subsequently Lacan's positioning of madness in relation to the self.
4. I will not be dealing here with texts which *give an account of* schizophrenic experience from a balanced, retrospective position. Narratives that tell the story of a person's experience of madness in order to question a society's institutionalized methods of dealing with it (for example, confinement within an asylum) almost constitute what might be considered a genre apart, and deserve special treatment as such. For example, such works as Hannah Green's *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* (1964), Janet Frame's *Faces in the Water* (1961) or Peter Sayer's *The Comforts of Madness* (1988) would come within this category. These are works whose style might be considered conventional, though they deal with unconventional material. The term 'schizoid' will be applied to texts that might be termed experimental and in which the 'madness' described more fundamentally affects its presentation.

1. De-composition Herman Melville's 'Bartleby the Scrivener'

1. Instead of dismissing Bartleby upon his refusal to work he discovers a need for further confrontation, 'I felt strangely goaded on to encounter him in new opposition' (Melville 1967, 72). At one point this self-inflicted state of constant struggle

reminds him of a murder case, which seems to indicate that Bartleby increasingly represents a persecutory factor in his life,

Bartleby and I were alone. I remembered the tragedy of the unfortunate Adams and the still more unfortunate Colt in the solitary office of the latter; and how poor Colt, being dreadfully incensed by Adams, and imprudently permitting himself to get wildly excited, was at unawares hurried to this fatal act...(ibid., 87).

Bartleby, he decides, cannot help his deranged condition, 'his eccentricities are involuntary' (ibid., 72), but such sympathy does not prevent him from sensing an impulse in himself, conversely, to kill Bartleby. Despite the danger of Bartleby reducing him to a pathological condition he does not want him to go. He finds a justification for this that belies his rational tone. He has a mission to perform with regard to Bartleby, 'Bartleby was billeted upon me for some mysterious purpose of an allwise Providence, which it was not for a mere mortal like me to fathom (ibid., 89). This development has been commented upon as overtly pathological. For example M. Kaplan and R. Kloss point out that,

He converts the ignominy of defeat into the exalted idea of a divine purpose. The humiliation of defeat, which he cannot erase at the risk of murderous violence, he dispels with a delusion of grandeur. Such a retreat from reality is shocking and gives the full measure of how costly his inhibition has become...[His] is the contentment of an all-but psychotic delusion (1973, 75).

2. An analysis of this literary text has been published within a psychoanalytic context. The connection between the narrator and Bartleby is interpreted by Christopher Bollas as a form of allogamous or interdependent psychotic manifestation;

Like the narrator, we discover Bartleby as he exists inside the narrator. Indeed, Meville's story is primarily concerned with how Bartleby sponsors affective states in the narrator who feels compassionate, nurturant, helpless, resourceless...This phenomenology of affect and defense is a phantom reflection of the silent scrivener, an affect language not spoken to the narrator, but thrown into and then lived out by him.

Bollas goes on to develop the idea of a split self along clinical lines;

It seems to me, after some reflection, that Bartleby embodies an absence in the self of this blithely cheerful narrator, a psychic double who represents the dramatic and aggravating presence of a repudiated true self; the internal other in the personality that is a collage of psychically, familially, and culturally disowned instincts and ego states that are never realized in the active life of the subject. Never actualized because they are sequestered through repression or

splitting from being lived out, they are known to the executant self by the energy and style of the defenses organized against this true self (Bollas 1974, 409).

The fact that Melville couples them together, isolated from the outside world and within a confined space, is productive of readings which describe them as linked in a kind of psychological double act. Kaplan and Kloss argue that 'There could hardly be imagined an interlocking of disorders greater than that which exists between the narrator and his scrivener' (1973, 68).

3. This is the term employed by Schreber when he realizes that 'God' wants to deprive him both of his masculinity and his reason. 'Premises' is a word that may also be linked here - metaphorically - in another sense with regard to his 'unmanning'. The lawyer is an adherent of the 'doctrine of assumptions' (Melville 1967, 86). Bartleby invalidates his assumptions in the same way as he has challenged laws of ownership by inhabiting the lawyer's offices. The lawyer gains some insight into the precariousness of his situation, 'that assumption was simply my own, and none of Bartleby's. The great point was, not whether I had assumed that he would quit me, but whether he would prefer so to do' (ibid., 189).

4. Melville uses a similar paranoid doubling motif to that in Hogg's *Sinner*. There are suggestions that Bartleby may have no existence outside the narrator's imagination. The impression is produced that the narrator never quite sees Bartleby as a discrete entity. Bartleby, it is implicitly suggested, may be, if not a double (in the manner of Jekyll and Hyde) at least a form of psychological counterpart to the narrator. Like Gil-Martin in Hogg's story, Bartleby simply, at first, mirrors and magnifies the lawyer's image of himself. Bartleby is 'a safe man';

His steadiness, his freedom from all dissipation, his incessant industry...his great stillness, his unalterableness of demeanour under all circumstances. One prime thing was - *he was always there* - first in the morning, continually through the day, and last at night. I had a singular confidence in his honesty. I felt my most precious papers safe in his hands (Melville 1967, 74-5).

In fact the narrator decides, 'I never feel so private as when I know [he is] here'. The scrivener, appears to be a complementary entity, a willed substitution for the other eccentric employees that render the lawyer's office a little less than secure.

Bartleby comes to provide a preternatural challenge to the lawyer, he imagines that he can call him up at will to satisfy his whim, but hopes that Bartleby will revolt;

I burned to be rebelled against again...Like a very ghost, agreeably to the laws of magical invocation, at the third summons, he appeared at the entrance of his hermitage (ibid., 74).

Bartleby does then rebel. Rather like Hyde however, once evoked he will not leave, but starts to persecute the narrator with his presence, clinging to the lawyer like an 'intolerable incubus' (ibid., 90).

5. Stone indicates the relative and deceptive qualities of law when he suggests that

When we turn our minds to considering the nature of law and its devices, we find our first reactions taking the form, not of logical discoveries, but of certain *assumptions* which are of impressionistic, rather than logical, provenance. Chief among these is that the assumption that the law itself *is* logical, so that...the process of applying its directives to concrete situations will be one of logical reasoning (1964, 44).

6. According to the *Longman Modern English Dictionary*,

7. Shortly before the publication of this story, in 1852, Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* appeared, also dealing with the Court of Chancery. Chancery here again represents 'dead letters'. Language become writing - an endless flow of documents - is dislocated from the speaker, beyond the self, inhuman and persecutory. The language of the law is presented as out of control, as tyrannical, as self-perpetuating. The narrator in this case (outside of 'Esther's Narrative') maintains a detached status, an omniscient position. Here, however, the voice assumes an objective perspective upon the pernicious effects of the legal process, the 'madness' of Chancery is framed, and controlled, by the narrator's security, just as the *origins* of this madness are localized within the Chancery building. Dicken's court of Chancery 'has its decaying

houses and its blighted lands in every shire...its worn-out lunatic in every madhouse, and its dead in every churchyard' (1983, 3).

8. It is again worthwhile comparing *Bartleby* with *Bleak House* here in order to underline Melville's more 'modern' and challenging treatment of madness. Dickens localizes the disturbing and deadening elements in 'Chancery' - the court is their source - though its effects may disseminate through people and across country. The case central to the story, and being dealt with in Chancery - Jarndyce and Jarndyce - is responsible for a temporary lapse of control in an ordered world.

Shirking and sharking, in all their many varieties, have been sown broadcast by the ill-fated cause; and even those who have contemplated its history from the outermost circle of such evil, have been insensibly tempted into a loose way of letting bad things alone to take their own bad course, and a loose belief that if the world go wrong, it was, in some offhand manner, never meant to go right (Dickens 1983, 5).

The mad Miss Flite and the dead Lady Deadlock are victims of *the place*, Chancery, and all that it represents as a socially constructed phenomenon, is seen as localized rather than as an ineluctable symptom of modern life. In 'Bartleby', however, the list of alternative occupations suggested by the lawyer to Bartleby, and refused, indicates that work in Chancery is simply one facet of a ubiquitous futility and meaninglessness (Melville 1967, 93-4).

9. For example, see Felheim 1961..

10. See for example the synopsis of theories of schizophrenia in *The International Encyclopaedia of Psychiatry*.

If a man deviates from the dynamic steady state, he becomes less efficient and produces entropy at a higher rate. As entropy production increases, man's efficiency diminishes correspondingly, since any increase in the production of entropy results in less energy being available for the performance of work...

2. Dis-integration in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*

1. Both the narrator's husband and brother are associated by the narrator with Weir Mitchell, to whom John threatens to send her (Gilman 1981, 18); Mitchell was a

physician who actually treated the author towards the end of the nineteenth century. His 'rest cure' was widely employed in the treatment of (nervously or psychologically) sick women. He treated both their physical and mental well-being by forced inactivity, over-feeding and a kind of psycho-therapeutic procedure which involved their 'moral re-education' (cf. Bassuk 1986, 142).

2. Writing would thus become just another way in which she loses herself, as Wallace Martin points out (suggesting that this is the informing pattern behind all modern fictional texts):

The idea of choosing a model to imitate conceals an insidious paradox. Freedom of choice is an expression of individuality; but the fact that we imitate another actually robs us of our self-identity. Our goals and desires are not really our own, but those of the Other - the role model. If we succeed in attaining them, we will probably find that they do not give us the satisfaction we imagined (1986, 41).

This observation is particularly pertinent with regard to the predicament of the woman writer, and Gilman's narrator is writing as a mode or gesture of escape from authority, from circumscription in an alien discourse. From another perspective, that model most closely associated with this text would be the female gothic (e.g. *Jane Eyre*), from which the narrator must remain distinct in order to sustain her sense of self-identity.

3. There is evidence, for example, that the narrator could be construed as collapsing into a post-partum depression (we know she has recently had a baby, Gilman 1981, 14). Kristeva's theory of the 'abject' provides for a possible rich interpretation of the degeneration of the narrator into psychosis: cross-culturally the natural functions of the female body have been considered unclean and uncivilized. The fleshy (fungoid), decaying and cadaverous quality of the narrator's hallucination and her breakdown can be seen as linked to the operation of the abject and its part in the creation/destruction of a stable subjectivity.

Abjection is the underside of the symbolic. It is what the symbolic must reject, cover and contain...It is an insistence on the subject's necessary relation to death [the subject as defined within the physical space of the body], to animality, and to materiality, being the subject's recognition and refusal of its corporeality...The abject is undecidably inside and outside the body...dead and

alive (like the corpse), autonomous and engulfing (like infection and pollution). It is what disturbs identity, system and order, disrupting the social boundaries demanded by the symbolic. It respects no definite positions, or rules, boundaries, or socially imposed limits...It is, in other words, an avowal of the death drive, a movement of undoing identity...Like the abject, maternity is the splitting, fusing, merging, and fragmenting of a series of bodily processes beyond the will or control of the subject. The woman-mother finds that it is not her identity or value as a woman which maternity affirms, but her position as a hinge between nature and culture. Pregnancy betrays any tenuous identity she may achieve as a subject and a woman (Fletcher 1990, 90 and 96).

Mary Jacobus (1986) has also examined the text in the form of a post-structuralist feminist critique of psychoanalytic presentations of hysteria and previous feminist criticisms of the story.

4. See for example Janice Haney-Peritz's analysis, or Annette Kolodny's study which suggests that Gilman's story should not have been 'relegated to the backwaters of our literary landscape' because it could have contributed to the evolution of a fiction which combined female experience and female authorship, and revealed and confronted a situation where 'women too easily became isolated islands of symbolic significance, available only to, and decipherable only by, one another' (Showalter 1986, 54).
5. E.g. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's analysis of the text; the wallpaper represents 'the oppressive structures of society...' (1979, 90ff).
6. I will be returning to the issue of femininity and language at a later stage in an analysis of Jeanne Hyvrard's *Mother Death* (the final chapter of part II).
7. Chambers dictionary definition: 'An ostensible motive or reason, put forward as an excuse or to conceal the true one...outward show...*praetexere*, -*textum* to weave in front, border'. This word is appropriate here because it manifests the connotations of deceit, concealment and falsity, inherent in the 'normal', systematized use of language, of the narrative process (as represented by John and by the initial strategies of the narrator) that are exposed when the subject experiences a loss of control over language. In addition, its significance as 'weave' and 'border' indicates the metaphorical dimension in the design of the wallpaper - which becomes the barrier

through which the figure in the wallpaper must escape.

8. As Lecercle points out:

He carefully distinguishes the normal speech of human communication from the nerve speech...Nerve speech is compared to inner discourse, and to dreams. It is silent, escaping the mastery of the speaking subject, and sometimes his consciousness. It is the language of possession, used by divine nerves to meddle with the human soul. It is language working on its own account, beyond or before consciousness (1985, 125).

9. For example, Georg Lukács' discussion of modernist writing:

The disintegration of personality is matched by a disintegration of the outer world...the problem, central to all modernist literature [is] psychopathology...Distortion becomes the normal condition of human existence; the proper study, the formative principle of art and literature...(1990, 64)

Or again, Meyers's synopsis:

Modern European Literature often concerns the abnormal and the pathological. It is characterized by a macabre sensibility, an attraction to decay and nothingness...defined by a mood of dissolution and disintegration, of paralysing anxiety and metaphysical despair. Disease both expresses and emphasizes the dominant themes of the modern age: hyper-sensitivity, self-doubt, loneliness, alienation, loss of identity (1985, 12).

And Brown's analysis in *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature*:

The decade 1914-1924 represents the historic node of English Literary Modernism. It also evidences a virtual paradigm shift in the presentation of self-experience - by consciously 'artistic' writers in particular...the war writers provided vivid socio-psychological evidence that, *in extremis*, the familiar Western egoic self was, quite literally, a sham (1989, 74).

3. Authentic Dis-continuity in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*

1. The problem of the identity of the writer as a female 'self', silenced or oppressed by patriarchal language, feeds into the approach of much recent criticism of Woolf's work. Woolf found herself (as she explains in *A Room of One's Own*) alienated and marginalized both as a female reader and writer. This position has been interpreted as contiguous with madness, in, for example, Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*, and in their recent work *No Man's Land*, where they observe Woolf's expression of

the multiple bind in which the twentieth-century writer feels herself to be caught...to become a woman writer may be, she fears, to become an invisible star in male sunshine - to be, in other words, marginalized, dispossessed,

alienated...to become a jealous neurotic or a madwoman (1988, 74).

Freud and Lacan have been drawn upon in recent analysis (for example Elizabeth Abel's study, *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis*, 1989). Most notably Woolf's texts are being read in the light of the psychoanalytical and linguistic theories of Julia Kristeva, as in the work of Makiko Minow-Pinkney (or of Jean Wyatt in her essay 'Avoiding Self-Definition: In Defense of Women's Right to Merge (Julia Kristeva and Mrs. Dalloway)' (1986). This kind of analysis offers many valuable insights into Woolf's writing, but is, I think, ultimately limited in its achievement by claiming the writing *for* the theory, disregarding the conscious process of theorization in the writing itself. It leaves the text trapped in an impasse where its polemical process is suppressed and it remains martyred to a 'female' condition from which the only possible redemption remains the establishment of a psychological utopia.

2. This aspect of Woolf's writing is that which is of most concern to recent criticism, which deals with the access to the 'psychotic' in her work. In this sense she may be taken to foreshadow the kind of thought developed by feminists today such as Hélène Cixous, who identify Western thought and discourse as being founded in the hierarchical binary opposition presence/absence organized around the phallus as Signifier, and, as Minow-Pinkney points out, advocate 'a feminine writing as the space where the repressed term...speaks, as voicing this muted Other' (1987, 17). (See also discussion of Hyvrard's *Mother Death*, in the final chapter of part II). The paranoid texts have in common an obsession with regaining or maintaining the centrality of the phallus as Signifier, actively foregrounding the repression of the other term, the mad, the feminine, the irrational, the incoherent, an anxiety founded in the process of signification. Woolf sets out to elude this tyranny of phallogentric anxiety. Pinkney proposes, using Kristeva's idea of the semiotic, that Woolf succeeds in creating a kind of androgynous, heterogenous writing, a writing that is - to borrow from Schreber - 'unmanned'. At least with regard to *Mrs. Dalloway*, however, it may only be appropriate

to assert that she creates the conditions for the reception of such articulation.

3. As, for example, Hawthorn's approach would seem to suggest:

In *Mrs. Dalloway* madness is seen both as a symbol and a result of alienation. Because madness does cut the individual off from other people, it is to be expected that many of the characteristics resulting from mental disorder may resemble those which result from a society which denies its members full human contact...Septimus, in other words, has a very low level of ontological security...Septimus form of madness is simply loneliness intensified beyond the point of human endurance (1975, 34-38).

4. Tambling observes that the London of *Mrs. Dalloway* suggests the very 'invention of tradition' is in progress.

The phrase...underlines the important investment throughout Europe, in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century and up to 1914, the period of unification, imperialism and nationalism, in uniforms, regalia, monarchy, national anthems, processions and attempts in public buildings to create a sense of a weighty, considerable past, of an extensive history. The London described in *Mrs. Dalloway* is the imperial centre... (1989, 140).

5. As Elaine Showalter observes,

this parade of emotionally incapacitated men was in itself a shocking contrast to the heroic visions and masculinist fantasies that had preceded it. The public image of the Great War was one of strong unreflective masculinity...The great war was a crisis of masculinity and a trial of the Victorian masculine ideal (1987, 171)

She demonstrates the repression of disturbed subjective experience by such strictures as 'duty', 'honour' and 'patriotism', and traces the ways in which this war-time rhetoric led to male madness, though it was 'only an exaggeration of the male sex-role expectations, the self-control and emotional disguise of civilian life' (ibid., 171). Showalter has pointed out the significance of its being named 'shell-shock' to distance it from the feminizing connotations of madness (ibid., 172).

6. The text was originally entitled *The Hours*. In her essay 'The Canonical Hours in *Mrs. Dalloway*' Harvena Richter ignores the imagery of violence associated with the regular chiming of London clocks throughout the book, to note Woolf's appreciation of rhythm and cycles; she shows how time in *Mrs. Dalloway* relates to the scheme of religious life. She proposes that the text observes 'the importance of time as a medium

in which selfhood and its psychological progressions are formed' (1982, 240). The association of the clocks, if there is one, with monastic life would seem to emphasize rather restriction and discipline - subjugation to an authoritative God not beloved of Woolf (as evidenced in *Miss Kilman*).

7. In *Three Guineas* Woolf again aligns patriarchy, contemporary fascism and the male ego with war and destruction. *Three Guineas* is written in the form of a letter answering another sent by a man who asks how war could be prevented. Woolf writes, 'We can best help you to prevent war not by repeating your words and following your methods but by finding new words and creating new methods...' (1938, 260). She observes that

The nature of manhood and the nature of womanhood are frequently defined both by Italian and German dictators. Both repeatedly insist that it is the nature of man and indeed the essence of manhood to fight (*ibid.*, 326).

8. In *Three Guineas* another more menacing erect figure emerges only partially obscuring a waste land. She proposes a picture of primary and absolute authority, a monolithic masculine ego:

It is the figure of a man; some say, others deny, that he is Man himself, the quintessence of virility, the perfect type of which all the others are imperfect adumbrations. He is a man certainly. His eyes are glazed; his eyes glare. His body, which is braced in an unnatural position, is tightly cased in a uniform. Upon the breast of that uniform are sewn several medals and other mystic symbols. His hand is upon a sword. He is called in German and Italian Führer or Duce; in our own language Tyrant or Dictator. And behind him lie ruined houses and dead bodies (Woolf 1938, 258).

9. Jeremy Tambling makes some interesting points on the role of Big Ben in English society, pointing out that Woolf did not yet know 'the emotional power of its chimes heard on the wireless in the Second World War' which 'acted as a focus for the nation'. He suggests that 'the novel startlingly anticipates this deployment of the clock for ideological ends' - and further as a powerful symbol in the age of the British Broadcasting Company. He proposes that:

Time's expression is not so much the existentialist enemy in this novel, as a part of the language of state-power which is felt to be threatening and minatory, and which clothes itself in its architecture and statues (1989, 139).

10. Drawing upon the work of post-structuralist and neo-Freudian feminist theorists Minow-Pinkney aptly develops this dimension in terms of the construction of language around the phallus as Signifier, 'the symbolic order, representation itself [is] made possible by the repression of "woman"' (1987, 17). Woolf's attitude is comprehended by Minow-Pinkney in these terms: 'Though the masculine ego has constituted civilization as rational, at the same time it leads humanity to the destruction of world war by its rapacious aggression' (1987, 64). In 'Seen from a Foreign Land' she comments on Woolf's later censure of World War II:

Woolf's lament over the mass destructiveness of the Second World War was tempered by a resigned aloofness; for her it was a *man-made* mess. She hopes for the emergence of a new 'I', plunging into the semiotic (1990, 176).

11. For example:

Diagrams, designs, little men and women brandishing sticks for arms, with wings - were they? - on their backs; circles traced round shillings and sixpences - the suns and stars; zigzagging precipices with mountaneers ascending roped together, exactly like knives and forks; sea pieces with little faces laughing out of what might perhaps be waves; the map of the world. Burn them! he cried. Now for his writings; how the dead sing behind the rhododendron bushes; odes to Time; conversations with Shakespeare;...messages from the dead; do not cut down the trees; tell the prime minister. Universal love; the meaning of the world... (Woolf 1976, 131)

12. Minow-Pinkney says of Woolf's concern with the signifier, symbol, and meaning:

The extent to which Woolf is playing with the conventions of novelistic interpretation is revealed as the aeroplane flies over London forming letters of smoke, presumably as an advertisement....For this 'key' to all mythologies is doubtless the transcendental signifier or solution to the hermeneutic riddle of the novel. Woolf tantalizes us with its possibility only to withdraw at once. As narrator, she refuses an 'authoritarian' relation to her own novel (1987, 59).

She rejects 'the thetic self and master-codes' (ibid., 59). The 'thetic' state may be taken to approximate to the paranoid state, the self subject to the tyranny of meaning production, the spectator watching the plane, speculating on its mission, de-coding the immanent and transcendent significance manifest at every moment in the Word.

13. Or suspended in what Minow-Pinkney calls a 'schizophrenic fragmentation' comparable to a Kristevan 'semiotic sea' of an authentic pre-rational state:

Such devices serve to 'fluctuate' the unified, fixed positionality, to create

effects of non-linearity and multi-dimensionality. Woolf thereby seeks to adumbrate the realm anterior to the logical, integrating subjectivity (1987, 161).

14. For example, having accepted that 'the repression of the feminine is the very condition of the human subject's speech' (and despite having gone on to acknowledge and adopt Kristeva's anti-essentialist stance which distinguishes the feminine from the semiotic or pre-Oedipal phase), Minow-Pinkney says of Rhoda in *The Waves* that she suffers 'a dispersal of pathological proportions', marks out a 'locus of feminine space' and represents an 'infinitely decentred' discourse (1987, 183). Woolf's writing, and her treatment of psychotic states, have come to be seen as an *avant-garde* manifestation of the concerns of current 'feminist' theory (Kristeva may not strictly function under this aegis). Dennis Brown observes that the

fragmenting self becomes very much a deconstruction of male presumption and the new discourse of selfhood appears as a 'feminized' or 'androgynous' style expressive of fluidity, versatility and holistic wholeness (1989, 179).

'Male presumption' and ''feminine space' are as much Woolf's polemical tools (as opposed to the authentic psychic material found lyrically expressed in the text) as they are of these recent critics.

4. Dissolution in Samuel Beckett's *The Unnamable*

1. Watt was so busy doing this, moving his hat to and fro behind him, that he neither saw, nor heard, the door open and a gentlemen come in. So his surprise was extreme...

And when Arsene has finished talking,

the man standing sideways in the kitchen doorway looking at him became two men standing sideways in two kitchen doorways looking at him... (Beckett 1963, 40)

2. Watt is supposed to give the left-over food to the dog, but there is no dog, so Watt sets about reasoning one into existence (not without non-sensical interruptions from his voices): 'By what means then, were the dog and the food to be brought

together...Watt now passed on to the manner in which this problem had been solved' (Beckett 1963, 90).

3. Defined by Genette as, 'the producing narrative action and, by extension, the whole of the real or fictional situation in which that action takes place' (1980, 27), 'the generating instance of narrative discourse' (1980, 213).

4. Hugh Culik offers an interesting perspective on the significance of the piano-tuners, the Galls, in this context:

These figures precipitate Watt's collapse by discovering that a set of internal external correspondences is random. They are piano tuners and find Mr. Knott's piano in such disrepair that it must be abandoned...The voice of the piano cannot be restored because its internal strings do not connect with the keys...the random relation between the piano's inner strings and outer keys suggests the tenuous relation language builds between the self and the world (1983, 61).

Culik notes that Beckett may be alluding to name of Franz Joseph Gall - who with John Kaspar Spurheim wrote an article called 'Cerveau' (1819) in the *Dictionnaire des Sciences Medicales*; this was the 'first reported localization of speech' in the brain. Gall was the founder of phrenology, instituting the beginnings of aphasiology. Culik's essay traces Beckett's apparently very accurate use of scientific disciplines especially of neurology and psychology.

5. As is argued in *God, The Quest, The Hero*, by Laura Barge (1988).

6. This argument is further discussed in the appendix, under the heading 'Further Linguistic Approaches'.

7. As Brian McHale argues, '*The Unnamable* foregrounds the fundamental ontological discontinuity between the fictional and the real...' (1987, 13).

8. As J. D. Arana records, 'next to a hypersensitive emotional disposition, a feeling of indifference or an emotional bluntness may coexist' (1978, 134).

9. Milner writes of her analysee, Susan

was still living entirely in her head, and she still had no feelings... Frequently in these sessions she would sit with tears streaming down her face as she cried, 'Give me back my feelings', but all the time insisting that the tears came only from her head (1988, 26).

10. For example:

But the eye, let's leave him his eye too, it's to see with, this great wild black and white eye, moist, its to weep with...Tears gush from it practically without ceasing, why is not known, nothing is known, whether it's with rage, or whether it's with grief, the fact is there, perhaps it's the voice that makes it weep, with rage, or some other passion, or at having to see, from time to time, some sight or other (331).

Then there is the way of flowing of my tears which flow all over my face, and even down along the kneck, in a way it seems to me they could not do if the face were bowed (279).

I feel my tears coursing over my chest, my sides, and all down my back. Ah yes, I am truly bathed in tears. They gather in my beard (279).

Labyrinthine torment that can't be grasped, or limited, or felt, or suffered, no, not even suffered...Next instalment quick. No cries, above all no cries, be urbane, a credit to the art and code of dying, while the others cackle, I can hear them from here, like the crackling of thorns, no, I forgot, it's impossible, it's myself I hear, howling behind my dissertation (Beckett 1979, 288).

5. Antinarrative and the Schizoid Text: Jean Hyvrard's *Mother Death*

1. Hyvrard has been characterized by Laurie Edson as 'one of the strongest feminist voices to emerge in France in recent years' (Hyvrard 1988, 111). Twelve years elapsed, however, before this text was made available in translation; years in which French feminist thought continued to evolve and contribute significantly to the main trends of current feminist criticism. Such thought, identifiable as a major influence in Hyvrard's text, is seen as relevant to this thesis (where other 'feminisms' are not here taken on board) in that it links in to the project via its particular emphasis upon textuality. Hyvrard's work can be said to be rooted in what has been labelled 'second wave feminism'.

Bearing in mind that the fallout from 'French' feminist critical theory is constrained by no national boundary, it is nevertheless the case that this other key strand of the 'second wave' originated in France. Deriving from Simone de Beauvoir's perception of woman as 'the Other' to man...sexuality (together with class and race) is identified as a binary opposition (man/woman, black/white) which registers 'difference' between groups of people - differences which are manipulated socially and culturally in ways which cause one group to dominate or oppress another. French feminist theoreticians in particular, in seeking to break down conventional, male-constructed stereotypes of sexual difference, have focused on language as at once the domain in which such stereotypes are structured, and evidence of the liberating sexual difference which may be

described in a specifically 'women's language' (Selden and Widdowson 1993, 222).

Mother Death offers a narrative (or antinarrative) which explores the oppression and liberation of woman through language.

2. See also appendix, 'Jacques Lacan and Language', for further comment upon Lacan's theorisation of the signifying mechanisms of language.

3. For a fuller discussion of Laing's work in this regard see appendix, 'R. D. Laing and Anti-Psychiatry'. The impact of such thought is also readdressed in the conclusion, in the context of its influence upon late twentieth century fiction and criticism.

4. This is further explored in *The Newly Born Woman*. For example:

Man
Woman

Always the same metaphor: we follow it, it carries us, beneath all its figures, wherever discourse is organized. If we read or speak, the same thread or double braid is leading us throughout literature, philosophy, criticism, centuries of representation and reflection. Thought has always worked through opposition... Through dual, hierarchical oppositions. Superior/Inferior. Myths, legends, books. Everywhere (where) ordering intervenes, where a law organizes what is thinkable by oppositions (dual, irreconcilable; or sublatable, dialectical). And all these pairs of oppositions are *couples*. Does that mean something? Is the fact that Logocentrism subjects thought - all concepts, codes and values - to the binary system, related to the couple man/woman? (Cixous and Clément 1986, 64).

5. In this work Irigaray, like Hyvrard, transgresses - or eliminates - boundaries; between theory and fiction, sanity and madness. 'The Looking Glass, from the Other Side' (the first chapter) is, like *Mother Death*, a textual performance that exposes the sense-making function of language as in league with masculine power structures (law, property, division, differentiation, control);

So he comes (back) in. It's teatime. She... She? She who? Who's she? She (is) an other... looking for a light. Where's a light? Upstairs, in the bedroom, the surveyor, the tall one, points out cheerfully. Pleased at last to come across a specific, unquestionable, verifiable fact. Pleased that he can prove it (himself) using $a + b$, or $1 + 1$, that is, an element that repeats itself, one that stays the same and yet produces a displacement in the sum; pleased that it's a matter of series, of a sequence. In short of a story. Might as well say it's true. That he...? That she? Was? Wasn't? She (Irigaray 1985, 12).

Irigaray suggests that narrative logic is an expression of male sexuality. She counters the 'male' desire to impose order (contiguous with the unity of the phallus) with the notion of female sexual plurality;

The *one* of form, of the individual, of the (male) sex organ, of the proper name, of the proper meaning...supplants, while separating and dividing, that contact of *at least two lips* (lips) which keeps woman in touch with herself, but without any possibility of distinguishing what is touching from what is touched.

Whence the mystery that woman represents in a culture claiming to count everything, to number everything by units, to inventory everything as individualities. *She is neither one nor two. Rigorously speaking, she cannot be identified as one person, or as two. She resists all adequate definition. Further, she has no 'proper' name. And her sexual organ, which is not one organ, is counted as none.* The negative, the underside, the reverse of the only visible and morphologically designatable organ (ibid., 26).

6. As Foucault says in his preface to *Madness and Civilization*, 'I have not tried to write the history of that language [the monologue conducted by science about madness], but rather the archaeology of that silence [that of madness]' (1967, xiii).

7. Cixous also speaks of this language or 'Voice' in terms of the lost mother(tongue):

The Voice sings from a time before law, before the Symbolic took one's breath away and reappropriated it into language under its authority of separation...In woman there is always, more or less, something of 'the mother' repairing and feeding, resisting separation, a force that does not let itself be cut off but that runs codes ragged...Text, my body: traversed by lilting flows...Voice: milk that could go on forever. Found again. The lost mother/bitter-lost (Cixous and Clément 1986, 93).

8. Such reflexivity is evidenced for example, in what almost amounts to the refrain of:

It all boils down to a question of words, I must not forget this, I have forgotten it. But I must have said this before, since I say it now. I have to speak in a certain way... (Beckett 1979, 308).

9. He suggests that what has been happening to madness in Western culture since the medieval era, and more profoundly since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when attempts at the rational explanation of madness began (the birth of the asylum, the initiation of modern psychiatric theory) has been crucial to the production of the modern, oppressed 'subject'. He also uses this 'silence of madness', as David Carroll observes, to claim for his work 'the power to situate all previous historical and

philosophical methodologies and systems and denounce their reductive strategies of analysis and exclusion' (Carroll 1987, 108); evidently a useful precedent for the feminist project of reclamation under discussion here. Foucault's own critical perspective is positioned, Carroll says, 'in such a way as to be so marginal, so disrespectful to tradition, that it cannot be situated, in its turn, by anything - by any history, ideology, or language - by anything that is, but itself and the 'disruptive discourses with which it identifies itself' (ibid., 108).

10. Phillip Martin has traced the literary history of the representation of mad women in prose and poetry, and connected them with the ongoing 'scientific' discourse about the nature of women carried forward by patriarchy. Martin observes, referring to the growth of psychiatric and medical thought from the eighteenth century onward;

If this body of discourse could be taken as a reservoir of its society's beliefs and practices, then we would be left in no doubt that it had a deeply established belief in the special proneness of woman to insanity, which went so far as to see it as a condition constantly attending her biological and social state (Martin 1987, 28).

Martin suggests that, traditionally, 'woman and madness share the same territory...they may be said to enter a concentric relationship around a central point occupied by a fundamentally male normality' (ibid., 42).

11. The abiding preoccupation with anti-psychiatric thought is also evidenced in Deleuze and Guattari's later *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* where they recommend a 'schizoid ideal' and the taking on of 'the utter innocence of madness' (Deleuze and Guattari 1984, 17). The requirement is passivity, acquiescence in an esoteric, self-constructed myth of eternal split-off-ness from a sense of being real in a real world.

12. Jameson's ideas are further discussed in the conclusion. He is concerned to develop a political view of the relation between capitalism and the postmodern condition. He uses the idea of the schizophrenic as descriptive of the plight of the subject thoroughly inhabited and fragmented by the cultural processes of late

capitalism.

13. This contrasts with his later use of the idea of schizophrenia discussed in the conclusion of this thesis.

14. As Hekman argues in *Gender and Knowledge*,

Feminism, because it challenges the modernist, Enlightenment epistemology, is an intellectual ally of postmodernism...the feminist critique extends the postmodern critique of rationalism by revealing its gendered character (1990, 2 and 6)

15. *The Postmodern Condition* has become, according to Fraser and Nicholson, the '*locus classicus* for contemporary debates' with regard to the relation between postmodernism and feminism. Lyotard's delegitimised metanarratives include 'Hegel's dialectic of spirit coming to know itself', and 'Marx's drama of the forward march of human productive capacities via class conflict culminating in proletarian revolution'. These are themselves legitimated in the 'Enlightenment story of the gradual but steady progress of reason and freedom' (Fraser and Nicholson 1990, 22); in which presumably Lyotard would also implicate feminism, since;

For Lyotard, the illegitimate genres include large-scale historical narrative and social-theoretical analyses of pervasive relations of dominance and subordination (ibid., 25)

16. As Mark Philp says of Foucault,

His philosophy is rooted in story-telling and in action. His histories...are fictions which seek to forge connections, establish relationships and transgress the established order and unity of discourse (1990, 79).

He goes on to suggest that Foucault's strategy may be

considered coercive, in that it is concerned with producing effects rather than with rational argument and persuasion. But this misses the fact that if we are disturbed by what he says it is because his fictions are recognised as familiar. It is as if they bring to awareness our inchoate experience of life in the modern State (ibid., 80).

17. Schreber appropriated this mechanism with some success, his fictional interpretative system allowing him, *as he thought*, to bring about the reinstitution of his masculinity with his reason (see chapter 1);

The scales of victory are coming down on my side more and more, the struggle

against me continues to lose its hostile character (Schreber 1988, 214).

18. Commenting upon Hegel's version of historical 'progress' she seems to see it both as a legitimation of male oppression, of oppression perpetrated by men in many forms, and equally as an adequate description of history.

That is what masters do; they have their slaves made to order. Line for line, they assemble the machine and keep the alternator supplied so that it reproduces all the oppositions that make economy and thought run (1987, 71).

19. Freud realized this to be the case with Schreber's *Memoirs* (see page 26 of this thesis). He saw that if the paranoid system admitted of no psychoanalytical *intervention*, neither did the interpretation of it need to take into account the 'real person' living through 'real events'; thus, ironically, Freud was able to allow the *Memoirs* to form the foundational construction which generated (or supplemented) his own influential thought system (Morton Schatzman's Laingian critique takes Freud's interpretation to task over this, in *Soul Murder*, 1973). This is further discussed under the heading 'Freud and Narrative' in the appendix to this thesis. Schatzman's analysis is also discussed here under 'R. D. Laing and Anti-psychiatry'.

General Conclusion

1. Bradbury and Ro see this questioning as fundamental to modernist experiment:

Before modernism there was a period of linguistic innocence when it was believed that language could conform to reality or nature like a second skin... the snake in this Eden was the discovery of the arbitrary nature of the sign; in Saussure's fatal vision of separation the worlds of discourse and things split apart, a process already imaginatively anticipated by the novels of James, Proust, Woolf and Joyce (1987, 41).

I would not go so far as to posit a linguistic Eden (indeed it appears, as I hope to have shown, that the sign was *suspected* of being arbitrary and was explored as such in prose narrative before the advent of 'modernism'). Yet the acceptance of the arbitrary nature of the sign must be considered as implicated in, if not fundamental to characteristic features of later fictional uses of madness.

2. Vonnegut introduces his work: 'This is a novel somewhat in the telegraphic schizophrenic manner of tales...' 1970, title page). This apparently anti-war, 'space-opera' text is Schreberesque in the proliferation of aural and visual hallucinatory experience, and post-modern in its disruption of temporal and spatial orientation and narrative process.

3. Scott Sanders attributes the paranoid core of Pynchon's fiction to the condition of the Puritan mind in the modern world, and finds it 'rooted in a theology from which God has withdrawn' (1986, 140): 'paranoia is the last retreat of the Puritan imagination... Thomas Pynchon, whose novels confront us with every degree of paranoia from the private to the cosmic, offers the most thoroughgoing example within literature of this mentality' (ibid., 149). God, as he points out, is the original conspiracy theory. Pynchon writes in *Gravity's Rainbow* that 'Paranoia... is the onset, the leading edge, of the discovery that *everything is connected*, everything in the Creation...' (1975, 703). Sanders's analysis of Pynchon suggests a strong resemblance between the structures inherent in Hogg's *Confessions* and those in *Gravity's Rainbow*. His schematic listing of the religious features of the work serves briefly to elucidate this link. Sanders explains that he is attempting to demonstrate that, 'the mental structures implicit in Pynchon's fiction reproduce dominant features of Calvinist and Puritan doctrine - a kinship of which he takes note in *Gravity's Rainbow*. The analogues which have emerged in my argument might be schematically listed as follows'. I will partly reproduce Sanders's arrangement here, as it is of some help in 'plotting' the links between a post-modern work and an early nineteenth century Gothic narrative:

<i>Pynchon</i>	<i>Puritanism</i>
paranoia	faith
cosmic conspiracy	God's plan
Gravity	God's will
membership in the firm	election
exclusion from conspiracy	preterition
...	...
remote control	grace
binary vision	theism/atheism

decadence of history
paranoid self-reference
the Zero

depravity of man
personal salvation
Last Judgement (Sanders 1986, 154)

This paranoid meaning-mechanism at work in *Gravity's Rainbow* displays similarities to those of Wringhim in Hogg's *Confessions*. Where Puritan religion was the system at work behind the scenes in this text, Sanders points to the basis of Pynchon's paranoia in the mystifying network of power relations governing the individual in a technocratic, totally administered, automated late twentieth century Western society (itself arguably a paranoid conception). However, as I will propose, Pynchon offers a world too unstable even to sustain a paranoid delusion.

4. Oedipa Maas in *The Crying of Lot 49*, for example, constantly experiences herself as the passive and confused victim of some kind of delusional, omniscient and omnipotent system, which she must continually struggle to understand:

The ordered swirl of houses and streets, from this high angle, sprang at her now with the same unexpected astonishing clarity as the circuit card had. Though she knew even less about radios than about Southern Californians, there were to both outward patterns a hieroglyphic sense of concealed meaning, of an intent to communicate. There'd seemed no limit to what the printed circuit could have told her (if she had tried to find out); so in her first minute of San Narciso, a revelation also trembled just past the threshold of her understanding (1966, 15).

Oedipa searches for ways of integrating the chaotic events of her life into a mysteriously organized and connected series:

Things then did not delay in turning curious. If one object behind her discovery of what she was to label the Tristero System or often only the Tristero (as if it might be something's secret title) were to bring to an end her encapsulation in her tower, then that night's infidelity with Metzger would logically be the starting point for it; logically. That's what would come to haunt her most, perhaps; the way it fitted, logically, together. As if (as she'd guessed that first minute in San Narciso) there were revelation in progress all around her (1966, 29).

5. Outside the 'System' at the heart of which is the rocket, is an anarchic area called the 'Zone'. In his analysis of the text Tony Tanner describes the functions of these states: 'as figures move between System and Zone, so they oscillate between paranoia and anti-paranoia, shifting from a seething blank of unmeaning to the sinister

apparent legibility of an unconsoling labyrinthine pattern or plot' (1982, 81),

6. Sanders (see above) states that:

The rainbow of Gravity is the trajectory of matter, from order to disorder, a process remorseless and irreversible...Gravity becomes the paranoid God, wreaking destruction upon an entire cosmos imagined, in Puritan terms, as innately depraved. There are no possibilities for grace in this metaphysic; it is Calvinist theology conceived in the mode of perdition rather than salvation (1986, 150-151).

Yet 'anti-paranoia' is a condition which denies this theology. Damnation is not, as Sanders proposes, the equivalent of a state of unmeaning or non-being for the individual. The psychomachia that torments Wringhim in the *Confessions* renders Wringhim of *total* significance to himself and to the cosmos. Were he to be damned he would join Gil Martin (the Devil figure that tempts him) 'raging with despair at his fallen and decayed majesty' (Hogg 1969, 239), not dispersed into oblivion. The immanent destruction of the earth is represented by Pynchon as a terrifyingly *reassuring* possibility for the paranoid who *needs* to believe in process, parabola, system, beginning and end, causality, reason, the evidence of self through positing its potential destruction, the truth of the world by positing its unavoidable demolition; but this is not the whole story: 'If there is something comforting - religious, if you want - about paranoia, there is also anti-paranoia' (Pynchon 1975, 434). The destruction or damnation that Sanders equates with paranoia is an essential part of the delusional system (as in Schreber). The destruction that Pynchon finally envisions entails the more terrible dissolution of this delusional system itself, the failure of those binary possibilities.

7. The fragile, precious 'inner self' is violated by some kind of totalitarian pressure; 'The humanist position is not to plug in flowers - to let them alone. Humanists believe in letting everything alone to be what it is, insofar as possible. The new electric awareness, however, requires that flowers be plugged in...' (1970, 136). The text possesses a vivid visionary quality, gripped at once by a sensation of

crisis and a lack of affect. Feelings are not appropriately connected to potentially traumatic instances. The impression that something momentous has happened may be presented in a flat, surreal, anecdotal fashion, 'A great waiter died...the body was poached'. Or again;

A dream: I am looking at a ship, an ocean-going vessel...it is caked with rust. And it is not in the water. the whole immense bulk of it sits on dry land. Furthermore it is loaded with high explosives which may go off at any moment. My task is to push the ship through a narrow mountain pass whose cliffs rush forward threateningly (Barthelme 1970, 139).

The narrator hears disconnectedly the voice of a nun saying 'it is not that we don't believe that your renunciation of the world is real. We believe it is real' (ibid., 147). The suggestion of crisis begins to take on epiphanic form (similar to the manner in which Joyce's Gabriel in 'The Dead' perceives the prevalence of snow all over Ireland);

Oh there's brain damage in the east, and brain damage in the west, and upstairs there's brain damage and downstairs there's brain damage, and in my lady's parlour - brain damage. Brain damage is widespread...And you can hide under the bed but brain damage is under the bed, and you can hide in the universities but they are the very seat and soul of brain damage...Brain damage caused by art. I could describe it better if I weren't afflicted with it (ibid., 148).

8. As Couturier and Durand have observed, the asylum in which Beckett locates his characters takes shape inexplicitly in Barthelme's work as a cumulative effect of the bedlam he invokes:

The absence of cross-references in these fragments makes it impossible to decide whether or not it is the same speaker who is uttering all these 'I's and 'we's. These fragments could be the rational utterances made on various occasions by a sane person, or a collage of statements made by a group of speakers, or the irrational utterances made at some particular time by a madman. The last interpretation seems the most logical, since the fiction is apparently about madness...as we read through Barthelme's stories, novels and visual collages, we have the uncanny feeling that someone is showing us around a lunatic asylum (1982, 15).

9. Instead of heading toward the unknown lands at the pole, however, Watkins is concerned with moving between the Northern and Southern equatorial currents, 'around and around and around...' (Lessing 1971, 19). The mode of narration mimics the

movement of the voyage, it is not linear and sequential but fragmentary and more clearly reflecting a flow of psychic images; as Watkins explains to 'Doctor Y' in the initial exchange between them, 'I'm not going. I'm being taken. The current' (ibid., 19). At first Watkins provides a succession of geographical reference points, but loses sight of these as he becomes concerned with expressing an unfamiliar reality:

We were four days out from shore, the current swinging us along fair and easy, the wind coming from the North on to our right cheeks, when Charles, who was on lookout, called us forward and there it was. Or, there they were. Now if you ask how it is we knew, then you are without feeling for the sympathies of our imaginations in waiting for just this moment. And that must mean that you yourselves have not yet learned that in waiting for Them lies all your hope. No, it is not true that we had imagined it in just such a form. We had not said or thought, ever: They will be shaped like birds or be forms of light walking on the waves... (Lessing 1971, 21).

10. The narrative mode is also comparable. As Keitel observes of Watkin's style, it 'impedes the reader's efforts to build consistency' due to its use of 'a language similar to that of dreams, a lack of contextualization, and frequent, unmotivated alternation between tenses' (1989, 97). The alternating, split narrative structure (the 'insane', subjective narrative being framed by a series of documents creating an objective 'sane' perspective upon the central protagonist) recalls Hogg's narrative strategy. However, the effect produced is one of inverting the implied hierarchy. The narrative of Watkin's experience ceases about half-way through the book, and is replaced by the collation of letters from family and acquaintances, apparently accumulated by Watkin's doctor in an attempt to help him reconstruct his past and his personality. Their arrangement, however, is non-sequential and erratic, the information they provide about Watkins, his character and relationships, is disorientating and unhelpful. It is impossible for the reader to build the connections between these, in relation to Watkin's own account, that would allow for the reconstruction of Watkin's personality; the conditions are not established that permit even the possibility of the 'psychotic' account being interpreted through, or becoming integrated into a 'reality' validated beyond the psychic, subjective reality presented

in the patient's account.

The scientific voice is undifferentiated from and over-ridden by the intense, detailed, and disorientated account given by the 'patient' of his psychotic experience. It is 'readable' in the sense that it is written cogently, 'unreadable' in the sense that it defies recuperation. It is open to the objection that it is 'lacking' in authenticity, because, like Gilman's text, it can continue to be coherently told whilst the protagonist undergoes psychotic experience, but this coherence is more apparent than actual.

11. For example:

On the surface of the little Earth, a little green film, and part and parcel with this film, being fed by it, the crust of microbes, mankind, mad, moonmad, lunatic. To celestial eyes seen like a broth of microbes under a microscope...these mad microbes say I,I,I,I,I, for saying I,I,I,I is their madness this is where they have been struck lunatic, made moonmad, round the bend, crazy...some sort of divorce there has been somewhere along the long path of this race of man between the 'I' and the 'We', some sort of a terrible falling away, and I (who am not I, but part of a whole composed of other human beings as they are of me) hovering here...feel as if I am spinning back (though it may be forwards, who knows? yes spinning back into vortex of terror, like a birth in reverse...)(Lessing 1971, 103).

12. This point is strengthened by the anonymous appendix, 'AFTERWORD, OR END-PAPER: A Small, Relevant Reminiscence' (a short statement under this heading, succeeding the last letter at the end of the book). This piece deals with the narrative instance of the text. The 'author', or editor (responsible for the collation of Watkins memoirs and the other documents) turns out to have known somebody (Watkins?) and to have *based* a story (becoming a rejected film script) upon the experience of that friend. This narrator tells of how the script was sent to two doctors, in order that the protagonist's illness could be identified for the purpose of producing the film (the script was rejected because the producers could not understand what was supposed to be wrong with him). The two doctors both gave very authoritative diagnoses of the man, each in total disagreement with the other. This anecdote is, it seems, provided to indicate to what extent the most respected Harley Street doctor has not come close to

'the truth' about psychotic experience.

13. Thomas Szasz objected to Laing's work as promoting a 'cult of authenticity',

As in psychiatry the core concept, the sacred symbol, is 'schizophrenia', so in anti-psychiatry it is 'authenticity'. In the former view, what the schizophrenic has less of than other people is the ability to 'test reality'; in the latter view, what the schizophrenic has more of than other people is 'authenticity' (1976, 57).

14. Some time after the bulk of this project was completed McHale published a book entitled *Constructing Postmodernism* (1992), which continues his application of the terminology of psychopathology to postmodernist texts. Most significantly, with regard to the concerns of this thesis, he develops a theory of paranoid reading in the light of works by Umberto Eco and Thomas Pynchon (McHale 1992, 165-185). He suggests that the typical postmodernist reader has been trained in the institutionalised art of paranoid reading.

15. I will not be tracing the evolution of this kind of thought as it emerges from marxist theory, firstly because I am concerned here only with recognizing the intellectual popularity of insanity in a broad sense, and secondly because, where comments upon contemporary culture invoke insanity it seems that any political agenda has been largely submerged (history *stops* at late-capitalism as it 'implodes' into insanity, or anarchy).

16. The primary cure being the falsifying of subjectivity as it is constructed by the myths of psychoanalysis and the capitalist system. Deleuze and Guattari combine ideas from Freud and Marx to redefine the postmodern 'subject' as a 'desiring machine'. They identify two kinds of desire: the paranoid and the schizophrenic. They equate paranoia with authority and fascism, the schizophrenic with revolution, *délire*, liberation. These are warring factions not only in the body politic but in the mind; there is no inside/outside, but a continuum between these zones. Freudian psychoanalysis is identified with paranoia. It is a 'mastering' discourse, always reducing the productions of the analysand to one plot, the story of Oedipus and the Phallus. Any

form of interpretation, for Deleuze and Guattari, is bad because it rewrites and imposes limitations. Psychoanalysis is particularly pernicious in that it is founded upon interpretation. It artificially 'constructs' a 'centred' subject, it entraps the decentred subject (the fragmented self in flux, that 'consumes and consummates each of the states through which it passes, and is born of each of them anew', made of part objects and itself part of other machines of desire, Deleuze and Guattari 1984, 40) in a rigidified text. They take the case of Schreber as an illustration, discussing the 'flattening out of Judge Schreber's delirium' (ibid., 86) by Freud's post-mortem rewriting: 'It should be noted that Judge Schreber's destiny was not merely that of being sodomized, while still alive, by the rays from heaven, but also that of being posthumously oedipalized by Freud' (ibid., 87). By this critical process they in fact transform (re-interpret?) Schreber the paranoiac into Schreber the schizophrenic, not as diagnosis of psychosis but in celebration of his authenticity. They implicitly re-contextualize Schreber's experience within the anti-psychiatric discourse originally promoted by R. D. Laing. They idealize Schreber as both victim and revolutionary.

17. Jameson builds here upon Lacan's description of schizophrenia as the breakdown of the relationship between signifiers:

Schizophrenic experience is an experience of isolated, disconnected, discontinuous material signifiers which fail to link up into a coherent sequence. The schizophrenic thus does not know personal identity in our sense, since our feeling of identity depends upon our sense of the persistence of the 'I' and the 'me' over time (Jameson 1983, 119).

He asserts that the experience of the postmodern self is analogous to that of the schizophrenic in the complete loss of any sense of continuity, historicity, and reality. He observes that Beckett's narratives are 'of this order':

most notably *Watt*, where a primacy of the present sentence in time ruthlessly disintegrates the narrative fabric that attempts to reform around it (Jameson 1984, 73).

In this essay he states that he will,

take up in turn the following constitutive features of the post-modern; a new depthlessness, which finds its prolongation both in contemporary 'theory' and a

whole new culture of the image or the simulacrum; a consequent weakening of historicity, both in our relationship to public history and in the new forms of our private temporality, whose 'schizophrenic' structure (following Lacan) will determine new types of syntax or syntagmatic relationships in the more temporal arts (1984, 58).

18. Where the *theory* of this condition has already eliminated the subject as a presence or unity, fiction provides a mode of *experiencing* the process of this elimination. Postmodern fiction is dramatic and performative (in a way that some theoretical texts, for example that of *Anti-Oedipus* aspire to being). It puts on a 'play' which requires the audience, the reader searching for meaning, to submit to the text, to be mastered by the text instead of mastering the text. In his discussion of the theory of the text Barthes discusses the way in which this theory should accept processes of word-play, 'white writing' ('which thwarts and deceives connotations'), irrational variations of person and tense, 'the continuous subversion of the relation between writing and reading; and in doing so reintroduces the subject as 'a cloven subject, ceaselessly displaced - and undone - by the presence-absence of his unconscious' (Barthes 1981, 44-45). This theory he gives the status of a science, and posits a text which - as for Jameson - is the site of release; 'it is a science of 'jouissance', any 'textual' text (one that has entered into the field of 'signifiance') tends ultimately to provoke or to live the loss of consciousness (the annulment) that the subject assumes fully in erotic enjoyment...' (ibid., 45). 'Signifiance', Barthes explains, is 'that radical work (which leaves nothing intact) through which the subject explores how language works him and undoes him as soon as he stops observing it and enters it. 'Signifiance', unlike signification, cannot be reduced to communication, to representation, to expression; it puts the (writing or reading) subject into the text, not as a projection...but as a 'loss'...Whence its identification with 'jouissance'; it is through the concept of 'signifiance' that the text becomes erotic' (ibid., 38). 'Signifiance' then involves the dissipation of the subject into Lecercle's 'madness that inhabits language' (1985, 74), theoretically, 'a creature at the mercy of the

monarchical Signifier' (Barthes 1981, 59, 67).

Barthes theory of 'white writing' correlates with Jameson's observation of schizophrenia as a 'basic feature' of the postmodernism artifact:

Schizophrenic experience is an experience of isolated, disconnected, discontinuous material signifiers which fail to link up into a coherent sequence. The schizophrenic thus does not know personal identity in our sense, since feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the 'I' and the 'me' over time (Jameson 1983, 119).

Working with grafts of theories of psychosis and language, both Barthes and Jameson *theorize* a hypothetical, liberational species of (fictional) text which serves in turn to illustrate theories of textuality and subjectivity.

19. As Peter Dews says:

Post-structuralisms can be understood as the point at which the 'logic of disintegration' penetrates into the thought which attempts to comprehend it, resulting into a plurality of inconsistent logics. The results of this defensive mimetic adaption can be seen not only in the internal incoherences of different post-structuralist positions, but also in their complementary onesidedness (1987, 231-2).

Psychosis (or an intellectual paradigm of it) is open to being used, outside of fiction, in the creation of a 'sovereign form of discourse' (108), as a weapon 'against the postulates of consciousness, reason, transcendence, continuity, totality, dialectics, subjectivity, authorship, etc', testifying by its mere existence to the 'reductive, coercive effects of the systems of thought organized according to these concepts' (ibid., 109).

20. In the Middle Ages and until the Renaissance, man's dispute with madness was a dramatic debate in which he confronted the secret powers of the world; the experience of madness was clouded by images of the Fall and the Will of God, of the Beast and the Metamorphosis, and of all the marvellous secrets of Knowledge. In our era, the experience of madness remains silent in the composure of a knowledge which, knowing too much about madness, forgets it (Foucault 1967, xiv).

21. This shift has been analysed in terms of Nietzsche's announcement of the death of God (in 1882). The death of God:

is but a metaphor for man's loss of belief in an absolute, transcendent source of significance for the phenomena of his immediate reality and for the self. The transcendent deity supported the dualist opposition between the self and an

objectified — hence 'external' — reality, since it sustained an opposition of spirit and matter, Heaven and Earth, and mind and body; its disappearance meant the collapse of these oppositions (Craig 1982, 16).

God may be assumed to have been dwindling since before Nietzsche proclaimed his demise, but Craig traces the exacerbation of the crisis of signification, of the growing incapacity to separate 'self' from 'other', to delineate with assurance the contours of reality, through the contributions of Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, Einstein's theory of relativity, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, Bergson's relativity of perception, Saussure's theory of the sign, and Derrida's 'deconstructionist' elaboration upon the work of Saussure. Freud would be included in this pantheon because, as Catherine Belsey says, he is thought of as having brought about a Copernican revolution 'in challenging the Cartesian basis of liberal humanism, the concept of personality determined by conscious subjectivity, the transcendent mind of the unique individual' (Belsey 1980, 130).

22. Stevenson's 'The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde', for example, quite clearly aligns Jekyll's murderous counterpart with religiously conceived evil (or even possession), but links the division to the effects of a chemical drug. At the time it was written the author could not have been aware of the more sophisticated language we now have to describe it. The story alternates, on the one hand characterizing the split as coterminous with the opposition between good and evil in man which moves the events into a supernatural domain, and on the other as residing in his supposed (after Darwin) primitive and civilized selves, which shifts them back into the realm of contemporary science. It nevertheless deals with ideas that have contributed to modern clinical discourse. It was already possible to *imagine* a self split in a form accessible to science (psychology later developed a technical vocabulary which as R. D. Laing says 'split man up verbally' (Laing 1965, 19).

23.

The recognition of the absence of a transcendent deity is the recognition that the meaning man has found in the world has been the meaning he imposed upon it,

by creating abstractions, whether theological, philosophical, social or psychological. And the abstractions by which he has separated himself from the immediate depended upon his abstract notions of a God that he imagined as giving significance to his universe; when that God disappears, the abstractions become meaningless and hollow.

When these abstractions become visible as systems by which man understands the world, they become objects of interest in themselves; and since language serves as the model for all cultural systems, language becomes a major object of interest in the twentieth century (Craig 1982, 22).

Appendix

1. The following discussion of Freud's reading of Schreber should be considered as an adjunct to the conclusion of part I, 'Provocative Narratives and the Paranoid Text'.
2. The 'cure' then, involves the point at which Schreber's text becomes gothic, in accord with Todorov's theory (see above, 22ff.). In these terms, Freud's 'resolution' of the moment of hesitation as suggested by Todorov, renders the text 'uncanny', rather than 'marvellous'. Yet, as is the case with the other texts examined, this moment is never really completed. Freud's theory of the nature and development of paranoia must first be elaborated: until that system is complete, Schreber's text is not 'whole-some', is not 'cured', and madness has not been excised from the activity of writer or reader.
3. This principle was also noted to be at work in Hogg's *Sinner* (see above, 63 and 74), and is present in Stevenson's 'Strange Case'. This core narrative convention, shown here as common to contemporary science, legal practice and gothic fiction, may be thought of as expressing an evolving paranoid dynamic within the Enlightenment faith in reason, based in the shared goal of total knowledge, and shared fear of defeat. This is only one facet of Freud's presentation of psychoanalysis, the 'nineteenth-century' as opposed to the more sceptical and relativist 'twentieth-century' basis of his thought; the tension between them is evident in his essay 'The Future of a Illusion' discussed above (291). As Con Davis and Schleifer have pointed out, Freud suggests that psychoanalysis is 'the fulfillment of the Enlightenment dream of reason so that

even the darkest powers with which psychoanalysis traffics can come to be governed by consciousness and knowledge' (1991, 30).

4. The psychiatrist, Michael Shepherd has drawn the analogy between psychoanalysis and detective fiction in *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of Dr. Freud*, calling Freud the archetypal detective and prototypical mental healer (1985, 27).

5. A similar urgency features in the approach of the narrator to Bartleby in Melville's 'Bartleby the Scrivener'. Though written in 1853, it could be considered an early precedent of Freud's psychoanalytic procedure, as regards the presentation of an individual (rather than an event, for example) as an enigma to be solved by the narrator/analyst.

6. Thus Freud's own response to madness in fiction, and in Schreber's *Memoirs*, relates to both Todorov's and Punter's view of the gothic text as identifiable through the presence of 'taboo'. Both Schreber's *Memoirs* and Hoffman's 'The Sandman' become gothic through the reading-effect, arising from their treatment of madness, that is observable in Freud's interpretations.

7. The scope of Freud's thinking here seems to reveal further the telling proximity of his thought processes to those of Schreber, suggesting the paranoid basis of psychoanalysis as Freud presents it, in its Herculean task of suturing the rent left by the destruction of the 'religious illusion'.

8. Here again, Lacan seems to be closer to both Freud and Schreber than at first appears. This is also an instance of the way in which the focus upon language, the 'textualisation' of self and world, comes to legitimise the breadth of commentary exhibited by the writers discussed in the general conclusion.

9. This situates *The Unnamable* as a foreshadowing of Lacan's proposition in its expression of the profound anxiety generated in the activity of speaking/writing.

10. The theories of Fredric Jameson, for example (discussed above in both in the final chapter and the general conclusion).

11. This discussion elaborates upon the issues that are raised in the introduction to part II, and carried through into the examination of fictional texts, in particular those of Beckett and Hyvrard. It also has some bearing upon Woolf's presentation of Septimus's madness in terms of fragmented and discontinuous thought processes (see above, 'Authentic Dis-continuity in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*').
12. This might seem an adequate description of Hyvrard's *avant-garde* writing, revealing the level on which it is, perhaps, consciously crafted to communicate or represent the psychotic state of mind of the protagonist in a manner recognisable to contemporary readers. However, in this case Hyvrard suggests not a 'failure' or an 'inability', so much as a *refusal* to take the role of the other.
13. These psychiatric theories have, in the context of this study, most bearing upon Beckett's *The Unnamable*. (Beckett is himself known to have carried out some research in this area: cf. Barnard 1970).
14. As discussed in the general conclusion above, with regard to the work of Foucault, Jameson, Deleuze and Guattari; also in the fictional domain, Doris Lessing's *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* and Hyvrard's *Mother Death* (which is discussed at length in the final chapter above).
15. Laing's representation of schizoid existence may be said, in this sense, to find its fictional expression in earlier texts examined; that of Melville's 'Bartleby the Scrivener'; and those of Gilman and Woolf - texts which seem to express or interpret such a vision from a feminist position. Most significantly for this thesis, however, is its marked influence upon the later writers mentioned in note 14 above.
16. This is also Foucault's, as discussed in the second section of the general conclusion above.

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This bibliography has been compiled according to the Author-Date or Harvard system as set out in the *MHRA Style Book* (4th edn., London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1991).

The Author-Date System has more commonly been used in disciplines other than literary studies in Britain and for this reason the MHRA system does not provide extensive guidance of a kind appropriate to literary studies. The *MLA Handbook For Writers of Research Papers* (2nd edn., New York: The Modern Languages Association of America, 1984) is helpful and has also been consulted (cf. section 5.7.1). This bibliography, whilst following the Author-Date system, is adapted as far as possible to the basic MHRA system. Where the MLA Author-Date guide conflicts with the basic MHRA system the latter has been given precedence.

In the introduction to this thesis the original dates of the primary texts which are the focus of each chapter are noted. Subsequently page references are to the edition or translation used. All references in each chapter are to the editions of the primary text recorded here, unless otherwise stated (cf. also n1 of chapter 1). Where a later edition of a text has been cited, the original date of publication is given here in brackets. Where a facsimile reprint of an earlier work has been used, publication details of that work have been provided. Where the edition of a primary text is a translation the original title and publication details have been included where possible. The original publication details of secondary texts in translation have also been noted where appropriate (as given).

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